Hafa Adai!

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CNMI sees 20 new naturalized citizens. PAGE 3

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Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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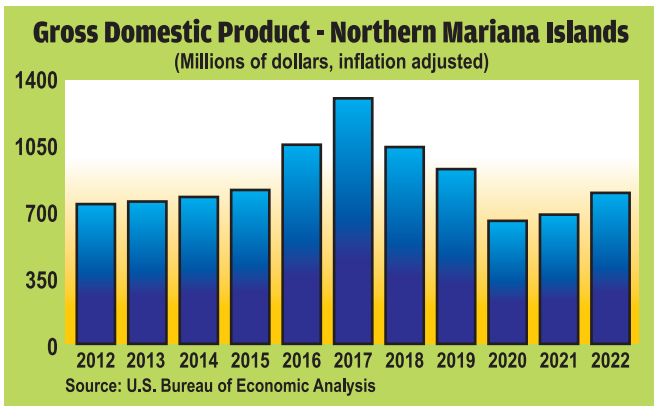
AFTER YEARS OF DECLINE DUE TO PANDEMIC, SUPER TYPHOON YUTU

Kilili: CNMI economy rose in 2021, 2022

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
delatorreferdie@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) disclosed over the weekend that after years of decline due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Super Typhoon Yutu, the CNMI economy started to come back in those two years, rising 5.1% in 2021 and 16.7% in 2022 after decreasing 29.1% in 2020.

Sablan in his *e-kilili* newsletter noted the economy's improvement based on the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis' 2021 and 2022 Gross Domestic Product statistics for the CNMI released last Thursday.



GDP refers to the value of

See KILILI on Page 4

DPS, MVA seek to address criminality in tourist district

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Following recent crime incidents in the main tourist hub at the Paseo De Marianas, the Department of Public Safety has ramped up its efforts to ensure safety by increasing police patrols and enforcement to deter crimes and address disruptions affecting local businesses, tourists, and residents alike.

Macaranas

After an incident where a man indecently exposed himself to a child dining with their family in Garapan, the *Saipan Tribune* reached out to DPS, to see if there were any actions the department would take to combat such incidents from happening again.

In a response, DPS Commissioner Anthony Macaranas emphasized the department's commitment to safeguarding the community and fostering a secure environment for all.

"This heightened presence

See DPS on Page 4

Marianas Beach Resort opens doors today

Cavanagh

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

» Sheraton branding still underway

The long-anticipated opening of the Marianas Beach Resort is set for today, Nov. 25, marking the first phase of a new chapter for the iconic property once known as the Hyatt Regency Saipan. Although the hotel will not yet carry the Sheraton name, plans to transition to the globally recognized brand are well underway, according to general

See MARIANAS on Page 4

DoD: Tinian divert 50% complete, North Field 90% cleared of vegetation

The U.S. Department of Defense provided an update on the Tinian Divert Airfield Project and its effort to revive World War II runways on Tinian during a stakeholders' meeting last week on Saipan.

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Marianas said construction is

See DOD on Page 4

DOD

U.S. Department of Defense officials, local government, and federal agencies meet for the CNMI stakeholders' meeting on Saipan last Nov. 20. The quarterly meeting's aim is to share information and discuss ongoing and future DoD projects.

INSIDE

LOCAL
The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority under the Office of the Governor, is announcing an important update to its fare structure, effective Jan. 1, 2025.
PAGE 5

WORLD
The Kremlin fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile at Ukraine on Thursday in response to Kyiv's use this week of American and British missiles capable of striking deeper into Russia, President Vladimir Putin said.
PAGE 10

LIFE & STYLE
Kendrick Lamar gave music listeners an early holiday present Friday with the surprise drop of a new album.
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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Return of ancestral remains ignites community spirit

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

After 43 years, several Indigenous remains made the 43-hour journey back to home soil, touching down at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport early morning Wednesday, Nov. 20.

The move was significant to many in the community, and this was evident as the Marianas diaspora in the U.S. mainland even travelled over to the University of California Riverside to conduct a sendoff ceremony for the remains, which included chants, prayers, and the offering of flowers.

A similar welcome awaited the remains as members of the CNMI community made up of cultural dancers and local *suruhånu* or herbal healer Donald Mendiola gathered at the airport last Wednesday. Following the dances and chants, Mendiola provided a Chamorro blessing for the ancestral remains.

NMI Museum of History and Culture director Leni Leon, along with a small CNMI delegation, including Joeten-Kiyu Public Library director Erlinda Naputi escorted and safeguarded the remains as they journeyed home.

Leon shared that the group had initially traveled to take part in the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums Conference in Palm Springs, California.

Leon shared with *Saipan Tribune* that just a couple of months prior he had received an email from Fran Lujan, a former CNMI resident of Chamorro descent who serves as a director and curator for the Pacific Islanders Ethnic Art Museum in California.

"She was informed by the NACPRA program at the University of California, Riverside, about ancestral remains that are in their possession and have been in their possession since 1981."

Leon said that the remains had been originally transported to UCR for radio carbon analysis, taken from three sites in the CNMI—areas within the Grotto Cave area and San Antonio's Pak Pak Beach on Saipan and on Tinian, the area near the Taga House.

He shared that upon learning this, the NMI Museum began consulting with the UCR Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act program, the CNMI Historic Preservation Office, Indigenous Affairs and the Carolinian Affairs Office on how they can repatriate the remains, all the while ensuring that they were in compliance, and they were taking every measure to respect cultural sensitivity, comply with the Native American Grave Protection Act, through which they were able to easily bring the remains home, as well as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

Leon

On Nov. 16, following the conference in California, a small number of the CNMI delegation, along with Leon traveled to UCR where the handover and sendoff ceremony took place. From there, the group would start the travel with the remains ensuring its protection.

"We did our best to be very respectful. None of the ancestral remains went through a Transportation Security Administration screening. They were hand-inspected, just to avoid any radiation and whatnot"

Leon shared that the send-off and the welcoming rites were both equally emotional.

"That was a pretty memorial event for me to witness. There were a lot of attendees that were very emotional, I would say. The same thing happened on Saipan when we arrived, while they were conducting their dances, their welcome home prayers and ceremony chants, I could see attendees in tears. So, I don't think it is much of a generational thing, but could potentially be an identity and a spiritual thing. Just to be able to know that their ancestors returned home and safely, I think that's what really touched their hearts. That's just from my observation," said Leon.

Personally, the NMI Museum director said the event also touched him.

"It was very emotional for me, and it was a pretty heavy responsibility for me as a Marshallese, doing this and not being neither Chamorro or Carolinian. And because I'm neither, I had to make sure that I took every process possible to be very respectful and considerate of cultural sensitivity. "

Leon said that the remains will be in his office at the NMI Museum until a final resting place, near the original resting spots can be decided. He shared that, so far, the Historic Preservation Office is working with the Tinian Mayor's Office to identify sites for burial for any unearthed remains.

"So, they're working on that. Then there is a construction going on at Pak Pak Beach right now and HPO is also working on constructing a burial site there as well. So, that is a conversation that I will need to have with HPO and hope that we can include these ancestral remains at those two sites so we can rematriate them with the others."

According to sources from the internet, while repatriation means a literal returning to the land of your ancestry, rematriation carries a deeper meaning of returning to a way of life, one that lives with reverence for nature.

As for the Grotto site, Leon shared that he had a very promising conversation with Department of Public Lands Secretary Ray Yumul who said they're going to help in identifying a site.

"There's potential for designation of land for the ancestral remains. I think what makes this particular rematriation unique is that it was very community and culturally driven with cultural advisors being the performers, and *suruhånu* Uncle Donald Mendiola was a really big help and played a big role in making sure that we were very culturally sensitive to these ancestors."

He also added, "I think, you know, it is important to acknowledge that it's the work of Native American tribe, tribes in California who really made this very possible. When they created the CalNACPRA." He said that through this program, it made the rematriation easy and they didn't have to pay millions of dollars to bring the remains back home.

Naputi also played a part in the rematriation process and shared with *Saipan Tribune* her personal experience in bringing back home the ancestral remains.

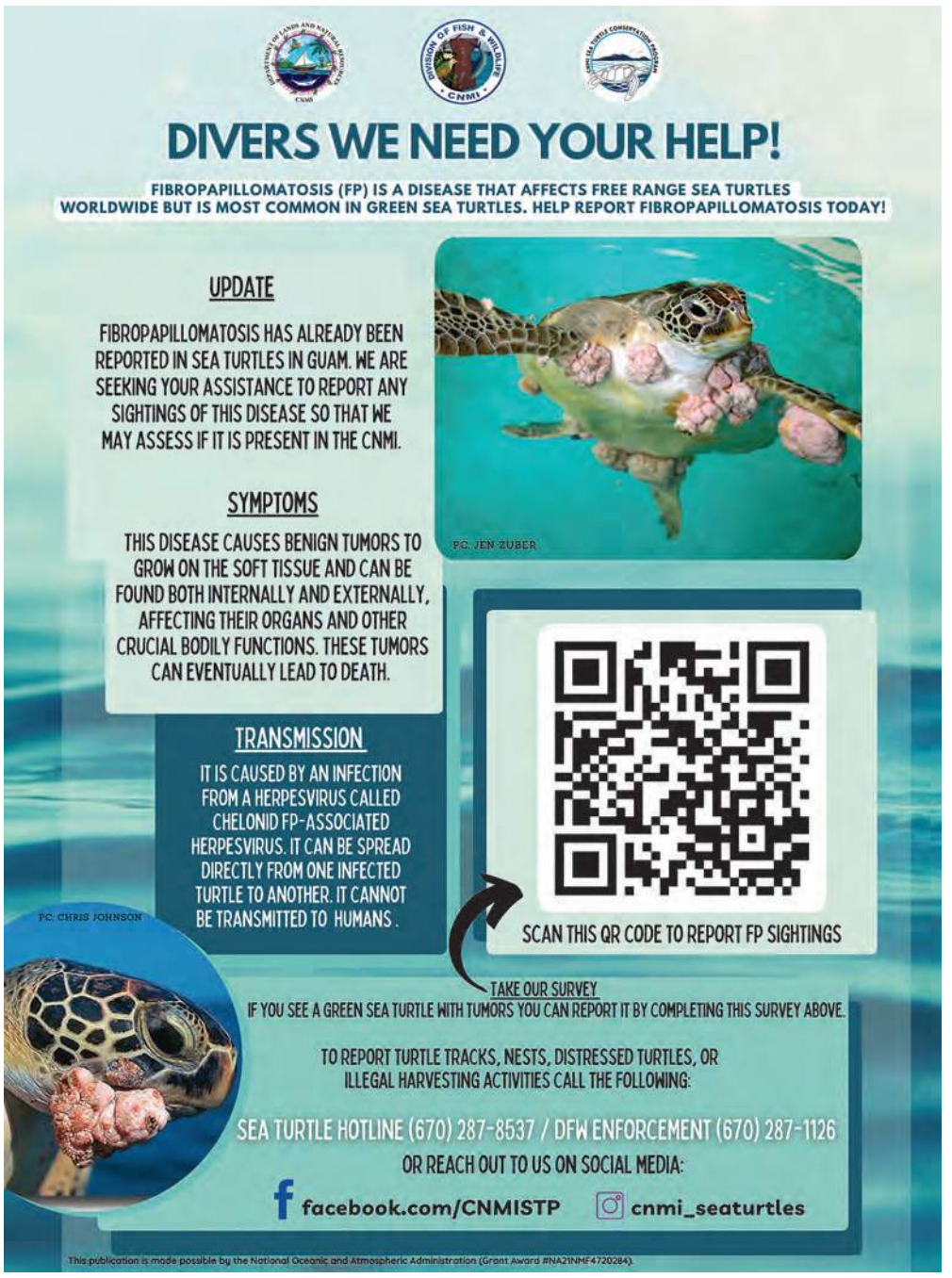
"Just knowing that our loved ones were out there and I know that they were brought out with good intentions to do a study on their remains and maybe get a better understanding of their gender, their age, and other information that was needed. But I'm glad that we were able to bring them home and lay them to rest where they once laid. It's always nice and a somber reminder that when we work together, when we work together, everything is possible. And just the beautiful ceremony, the going-away ceremony, the receiving ceremony here at the airport that we got from Francis Sablan and April Lepeki and their group and Uncle Don with his blessing and the people that were there to welcome us. It's just was beautiful."

She also couldn't describe in words her feeling when she first opened the container where the ancestral remains were resting for the past 40 years.

"You can feel that energy from where they were for the past 40 years. The energy and the strength that they gave us to carry forth with and bring them home. There are no words to describe the feeling that you get when you first hold them in your arms. I'd like to acknowledge and give credit to our Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, and the Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang for giving us the opportunity and allowing us the opportunity to be a part of this very historic event."

Naputi also gave kudos to Leon for helping in the process of rematriating the ancestral remans.

" I'm of Marianas descent and it really touched me to see that, even though Leni is not of Marianas descent or an indigenous Chamorro-Carolinian, he still took the initiative to bring our people home. And with that, I thank him for leading us and guiding us in this effort. As a library director, my involvement is really to just connect people with the right institution, give them the information that they needed. And when they reached out to me a year ago, last November 2023, I could only do what I could as a director, putting them in contact with the right people. As much as I want to be the one to lead the efforts of bringing our ancestral remains, I'm not in the right position to do so. We are very fortunate and lucky to have all the support from the president of Association of Tribal Archives, Library Museum, Susan Feller, also Dr. Tarisi Vunidilo, and her husband, and the rest of our Pacific Islanders for standing with us during this time. We are forever grateful for all the support that we received while we were out there."


DIVERS WE NEED YOUR HELP!
FIBROPAPILLOMATOSIS (FP) IS A DISEASE THAT AFFECTS FREE RANGE SEA TURTLES WORLDWIDE BUT IS MOST COMMON IN GREEN SEA TURTLES. HELP REPORT FIBROPAPILLOMATOSIS TODAY!
UPDATE
FIBROPAPILLOMATOSIS HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED IN SEA TURTLES IN GUAM. WE ARE SEEKING YOUR ASSISTANCE TO REPORT ANY SIGHTINGS OF THIS DISEASE SO THAT WE MAY ASSESS IF IT IS PRESENT IN THE CNMI.
PC. JEN ZUBER
SYMPTOMS
THIS DISEASE CAUSES BENIGN TUMORS TO GROW ON THE SOFT TISSUE AND CAN BE FOUND BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, AFFECTING THEIR ORGANS AND OTHER CRUCIAL BODILY FUNCTIONS. THESE TUMORS CAN EVENTUALLY LEAD TO DEATH.
TRANSMISSION
IT IS CAUSED BY AN INFECTION FROM A HERPESVIRUS CALLED CHELONID FP-ASSOCIATED HERPESVIRUS. IT CAN BE SPREAD DIRECTLY FROM ONE INFECTED TURTLE TO ANOTHER. IT CANNOT BE TRANSMITTED TO HUMANS.
SCAN THIS QR CODE TO REPORT FP SIGHTINGS
PC. CHRIS JOHNSON
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OR REACH OUT TO US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:
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cnmi_seaturtles
This publication is made possible by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Grant Award #NA21NMF4720284).

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Matter of the Petition for the Appointment of General Guardianship for:	FCD-GU CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-0434
	NOTICE OF HEARING
K.L.B.C. AND K.L.B.C. Minor Child(ren)	
By:	
COURTNEY TEMOL KLEWEI Petitioner(s)	

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for hearing on December 2, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 28th day of October, 2024

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/_____
By: Deputy Clerk of Court

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI sees 20 new naturalized citizens

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
In celebration of Veteran's Day, the U.S. District Court for the NMI held a special naturalization ceremony where 20 new U.S. citizens were sworn in.

The CNMI saw 20 new naturalized U.S. citizens following a swearing-in ceremony at the U.S. District Court for the NMI.

In celebration of Veteran's Day last Nov. 11, the District Court for the NMI held a special naturalization ceremony where 20 new U.S. citizens were sworn in.

The newly naturalized citizens are Tamara Natalia Adel, Candylen Rocomora Camu, Japie Alcorcon Cruz, Felisa Balingit Guevarra, Reagime Rufino Jensen, Mountain Ho Joon Joo, Sung Chul Kim, Patricia Apolonio Magallano, Bryan Ulysses Estrella Manabat, Josephine Hilario Orcia, Belinda Esguerra Palma, Leticia Felipa Gaffud Pantaleon, Sarah Jane Umayam Piteg, Antonio Paras Racelis, Glenda Lizada Racelis, Md Mamunur Rahman, Elsie Grace Narbarte Ringor, Ziqiang Song, Edgar Cunanan Tuazon, and Maria Cristina Tuazon.

In celebration of Veteran's Day, the guest speaker during the naturalization ceremony was Rear Adm. Brent DeVore who expressed how remarkable the commitment is to be naturalized.

"Your journey is a story of courage, determination, and resilience. The commitment you are making today is especially remarkable, because here in Saipan, we are thousands of miles away from the nearest coast of the continental United States. It goes to show that our American values ring true and inspire people to seek democracy all around the world. This is the first day of a new chapter in your lives, but you bring with you a vast array of experiences that have shaped who you are today. And now, in taking the oath, you join millions of naturalized citizens who also chose America, and have contributed to our nation's incredible diversity through sharing their traditions, languages, and perspectives. I hope you do the same," he said.

DeVore expressed that naturalization is just the beginning.

"Today, you mark the start of your American Dream and that can truly be anything you want it to be. For some of you, the American Dream might be starting a little later in life, and that's okay. It is especially inspiring to see that American citizenship is worth the wait," he said.

"As you embark on this new chapter of your lives, I hope you recognize that being an American means more than just a passport. As an American you represent our nation, and the values we hold dear—freedom, justice, and liberty for all. I am confident that you will carry the torch of freedom high, knowing that your future is yours to shape. Being part of your ceremony is humbling and makes me truly proud to be an American. Thank you again, for allowing me to be part of this special day," DeVore added.

DPS announces occupant protection, sobriety checkpoints for Thanksgiving

The Department of Public Safety is reminding the public to prioritize safety during the busy holiday season as it announces a series of occupant protection and sobriety checkpoints set for Nov. 27 and 28, 2024.

In a media release, DPS outlined the set of checkpoints. The first checkpoint, focusing on occupant protection and child restraint compliance, will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 27, along Chalan Msgr. Guerrero from San Jose to Dandan between 8am and 10:30am.

Later that evening, two sobriety checkpoints will be in operation. The first will be on Chalan Pale Arnold from Garapan to Chalan Laulau from 6pm to 8:30pm, followed by a second checkpoint along Beach Road from Garapan to San Jose from 9pm to 11:30pm.

On Thursday, Nov. 28, sobriety checkpoints will continue with one on Beach Road from Garapan to Chalan Piao from 1pm to 3pm, and another on Chalan Pale Arnold from Chalan Laulau to Puerto Rico from 4pm to 6pm.

DPS urges all drivers to ensure their safety and the safety of others by complying with seatbelt and child restraint requirements and refraining from driving under the influence. These efforts, the department said, aim to reduce the risk of accidents and enhance road safety during one of the busiest travel weekends of the year.

Motorists are encouraged to plan ahead, drive responsibly, and remain vigilant as officers carry out these safety initiatives across Saipan. ***(Chrystal Marino)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp • Website: http://www.nmhcgov.net

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

(This ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC RFP 2025-001

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: December 18, 10:00 a.m.

"ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES"

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Services will be available on November 18, 2024, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or by visiting the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Inquiries or clarification regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing or email to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or submitted by facsimile to (670)234-9021 no later than 4:00 PM local time on December 06, 2024.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Acting-Corporate Director
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC)

/s/
Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ)

RFQ25-CHCC/DESIGN BUILD-001

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTORS FOR COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation (CHCC) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CHCC hereby seeks the services of a qualified Contractors to perform Design/Build Services for Projects located at the hospital in Saipan, Clinics in Tinian and Rota. The selected Contractors will be issued a Contract thru RFQ25-CHCC-DESIGN/BUILD-001. These services are in accordance with CHCC's Procurement Rules and Regulations and procedures shall be in full compliance with Section 140-80.1-250 Pre-Qualification of Contractors and

The Request for Proposals and Scope of Work is available on November 1st, 2024 online at www.chcc.health, navigate to the RFP tab on the left navigation bar, click on the URL for this RFP243-CHCC/DESIGN BUILD-001.

A Pre-conference meeting will be held on November 8th, 2024 at 9:00AM at the Conference Room #2 located in main Executive Office.

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing via email to Ms. Cora P. Ada, Director of Procurement at cora.ada@chcc.health and to Jesse Tudela, COO/Ancillary Director at jesse.tudela@chcc.health no later than November 25th, 2024.

Proposers shall submit proposals and all supporting documents to Corazon P. Ada, Director, CHCC Division of Procurement and Supply, at procurement@chcc.health, no later than: 16300hrs (1630) Chamorro Standard Time on December 4th, 2024.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

AMENDMENT No. 1

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
NMHC IFB 2025-~~001~~ 002

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: December 03, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

Vehicle Lease of 3-Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV) for the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program in Saipan

Bid information and packet is available on November 18, 2024, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab" or at the CDBG-DR website at www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

Inquiries regarding this bid shall be submitted to Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net or facsimile at (670)234-9021, on or before September 10, 2024, no later than 10 a.m.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Acting-Corporate Director

/s/ Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

FEMA offers $280M in cybersecurity funding for states, territories

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is offering a significant funding opportunity to state, local, and territorial governments through its State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program.

With nearly $280 million available for fiscal year 2024, this program aims to help communities enhance their cybersecurity resilience, protect critical infrastructure, and better respond to evolving cyber threats. This is an excellent chance to secure funding for your projects and strengthen your cybersecurity posture.

Funding opportunity overview

FEMA is offering nearly $280 million in FY 2024 funding through the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program to help state, local, and territorial governments reduce cybersecurity risks and protect critical infrastructure. This funding supports projects that strengthen cybersecurity resilience and response capabilities.

Key program objectives

Applicants must address at least one of the following objectives:

- Governance and Planning: Develop or improve state cybersecurity plans.
- Cybersecurity Assessments: Identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Risk-Based Security Measures: Implement measures based on assessed risks.
- Workforce Training: Train personnel in cybersecurity practices.

FUNDING ALLOCATION

Minimum Allocations

- States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: $3.047 million each.
- American Samoa, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands: $761,916 each.
- Additional funds are allocated based on population size.
- Performance Period: Feb. 1, 2025 — Jan. 31, 2029

Key deadlines and submission guidelines

- Application Deadline: Dec. 3, 2024, 5:00 PM ET.
- Submission: Apply through the FEMA Grants Outcomes System.
- Funding Announcement: Expected by Feb. 1, 2025.

Cost share requirements

- 30% cost share for most applicants.
- 20% for multi-entity projects.
- Waived for certain U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, etc.).

Best practices for cybersecurity projects

- Implement multifactor authentication (MFA).
- Ensure strong encryption and secure backup/recovery systems.
- Avoid using unsupported software and enforce strong password policies.

How to apply

- Review FEMA's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
- Submit your application by Dec. 3, 2024.
- Ensure your FEMA-approved cybersecurity plan is submitted by Jan. 30, 2025.

Don't miss out on this crucial opportunity to improve your cybersecurity infrastructure and resilience. With applications due by Dec. 3, 2024, now is the time to prepare and submit your proposal. Be sure to review FEMA's guidelines and submit your application on time to take full advantage of this funding.

For more information, visit FEMA's NOFO page or reach out to the FEMA SLCGP team at FEMA-SLCGP@fema.dhs.gov. ***(PR)***

KILILI

From page 1

the goods and services produced by an economy less the value of the goods and services used up in production.

The delegate said the 2022 improvements were due to increased tourism, business equipment investment, and government spending, particularly U.S. Air Force construction work on the Tinian divert airfield.

He said net consumer spending fell in 2022, however, as price increases outpaced the value of the dollar.

On the CNMI's GDP for 2022, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis news release, the growth in real GDP from 2021 to 2022 reflected increases in exports, government spending, and private fixed investment.

BEA said these increases were partly offset by a decrease in personal consumption expenditures or PCE.

BEA noted that imports, a subtraction item in the calculator of GPD, increased.

Exports increased 324.9% and this was accounted for by exports of services, which consists primarily of visitor spending.

According to the CNMI government's statistics, visitor arrivals increased 656.4% in 2022.

BEA said government spending increased 4.7%, reflecting increases in both territorial and federal government spending.

Territorial government spending increased 3.3%, supported by federal grants.

The grants include the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds payments and Education Stabilization Fund payments authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020; the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021; and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

BEA said the federal government spending increased 22.8% and such increase reflected construction spending associated with the U.S. Air Force's Tinian Divert Airfield project.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

MARIANAS

From page 1

manager Gloria Cavanaugh.

"We're thrilled to welcome guests back to this beloved property," Cavanaugh said during a recent interview. "While the Sheraton branding will take a few more months, we are opening as Marianas Beach Resort to give the community an opportunity to enjoy the hotel again while we finalize franchise agreements and undertake renovations."

The property, which boasts 50 years of history as the former Continental Hotel and later the Hyatt, is entering a new era under the MB Capital LLC. Cavanaugh confirmed that the steps toward the Sheraton franchise are progressing, and the implementation of the Marianas Beach Resort was a temporary situation until the complete transformation, and that renovations aligning with Sheraton's standards will follow in phases, starting with the main building's 180 rooms.

"The changes will be transformative," she said. "This isn't going to be a return to 1980s or 1990s design. We're talking about a sleek, classy, and modern look worthy of the Sheraton name."

Cavanaugh shared that the renovation process will avoid disrupting the Marianas Beach Resort's guest experience. Construction will begin with accessible back-area work and minimize visible disruptions.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

DPS

From page 1

is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure the safety of all who visit and live in our community," Macaranas said.

He shared that DPS is also taking steps to address growing concerns about loitering individuals in the hotel district, which local businesses say has led to disruptions for patrons and staff. A meeting between DPS and business owners is being planned to openly discuss these concerns and explore collaborative solutions.

"DPS is committed to addressing the disruption caused by the presence of loitering individuals in the hotel district and working to reduce the impact on local businesses," he added.

In addition to law enforcement efforts, Macaranas said that DPS is working closely with other agencies that specialize in support services to ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals involved.

"Additionally, DPS collaborates with other agencies that specialize in support services, ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals involved are addressed."

DPS encourages community members and businesses to voice their concerns and work together to create long-term solutions. For more information, contact DPS directly.

In a conversation with Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Gloria Cavanaugh, she shared that she's heard and seen the basis of the rising concern..

"We have a homeless problem here in Garapan. It's very scary, and very bad for tourists."

She shared that she's heard some comments that this should be addressed by MVA.

"We've adopted a lot of initiatives because nobody else wants to do it or nobody else can do it. But the homelessness is something that is so important, especially in this area. And MVA is willing to participate in that subject. But really, it starts with the Legislature. I think it was maybe six years ago where it was Ms. Tina Sablan who tried to push a law that stated that you would be able to get this individual and force them into having some sort of mental health assistance, and that never passed. So, you know, I've talked to the [police] commissioner before, and I go, 'is there anything we could do?' They said, yes, 'we could pick them up, but we can't hold them.' And so, it needs to be something that the whole community and the government need to work on together so that we could have a solution to it."

DOD

From page 1

around 50% complete on the Tinian Divert Airfield Project.

The Tinian Divert Airfield—to which is being constructed largely on the north side of the Tinian airport—will allow the U.S. Air Force to use Tinian as an alternative landing site for its planes—a divert airfield—in case Anderson Air Force Base in Guam is inaccessible due to war or calamities.

Meanwhile, Pacific Air Forces provided an update on Tinian's North Field where vegetation removal is around 90% complete. The work is part of the adaptive rehabilitation project currently underway to restore the historic site.

During the stakeholders' meeting, no less than Gov. Arnold I. Palacios welcomed military leaders including Navy Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, commander, Joint Task Force-Micronesia; Mobilization Assistant to the Commander, Indo-Pacific Command Air Force Brig. Gen. Christopher K. Faurot; and Rear Adm. Brent DeVore, commander, Joint Region Marianas for the meeting and subsequent working groups.

Other key leaders in attendance included Senate President Edith DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), Special Assistant to the CNMI Governor Ed Camacho, Tinian Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, and Tinian Sens. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) and Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian).

"Today's meeting was important because it was very robust and productive discussion on where we are at with CJMT (CNMI Joint Military Training) projects and additional activities on the island of Tinian as well as future plans for Saipan and Rota," Palacios said.

He added that ensuring the CNMI and DoD work together with open and continuous dialogue is key to mission accomplishment.

"It's a very mutually beneficial relationship … a relationship that needs to be fostered," Palacios said. "Both parties have their interests and we come together to ensure that both parties meet their goals effectively and build a foundation for long-term growth and partnership."

During the event, the Innovative Readiness Training team shared outcomes from its exercise that provided $2.1 million worth of full-spectrum medical services to residents of the CNMI at no cost to the patients. The exercise provided hands-on training experience to promote mission readiness of service members.

"Collaboration and open communication are critical to our shared success," Huffman said. "These meetings ensure we are on the right track with the multiple projects currently taking place in the CNMI and those planned for the future while respecting the people, the environment, and the rich culture of this island territory."

The stakeholders' meeting was established to foster collaboration among the DoD, local government, and federal agencies to share information, discuss, and provide recommendations for military activities and opportunities in the CNMI. It is held quarterly with the next meeting slated for spring 2025.

Joint Task Force-Micronesia's mission is to synchronize operations and activities across all domains, enabling a robust warfighting posture while enhancing partner nation capacity. Dedicated to promoting regional stability, it performs Homeland Defense, Defense Support to Civil Authorities, and Foreign Humanitarian Assistance through a whole of government approach within its assigned joint operations area.

Joint Region Marianas' mission is to provide executive level installation management support to all DoD components and tenants through assigned regional installations on Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands in support of training in the Marianas; to act as the interface between the Navy and the civilian community; to ensure compliance with all environmental laws and regulations, safety procedures, and equal opportunity policy; and perform other functions and tasks as may be assigned.

For more information about JTF-M, visit https://www.pacom.mil/JTF-Micronesia/

For more information about JRM, visit https://jrm.cnic.navy.mil/. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

COTA announces updated fare structure to support service expansion

The Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority under the Office of the Governor, is announcing an important update to its fare structure, effective Jan. 1, 2025. This marks the first fare increase since the program's inception in 2013, and it is a crucial step in supporting the expansion of our public transit services.

While COTA is federally funded, it is important to note that we cannot solely depend on federal funding to meet the growing needs of our communities. Federal grants help maintain our existing operations, but they do not provide enough resources to enable expansion, especially in response to the increasing demand for transit services. As grantees of the federal program, we are allowed to charge a fare, and the revenue generated from these fares plays a vital role in the sustainability and growth of our transit system.

The decision to adjust fares comes in light of several critical factors, including:

■ Rising operational costs, particularly the significant increase in fuel prices and maintenance expenses, have placed additional pressure on our budget.

■ The need for continued service expansion, including new routes to improve accessibility to underserved areas and ensure our system keeps pace with population growth.

■ Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the program, as the funding provided by the federal government does not adequately support expansion efforts or the rising costs of running the system.

Effective Jan. 1, 2025, the following updated fares will apply:

TransitCNMI: Fixed Route Service

■ General public: $2 per trip

■ Discounted: $1 per trip

CALL-A-RIDE-SAIPAN (CARS): Demand Responsive Shared Ride Service (curb-to-curb, reservation-based)

■ General public: $7 per trip

■ Discounted: $5 per trip

Discounted: Senior Citizens, Students, Persons with disabilities, Active Military, Veterans, and their families (must present valid ID).

'Driving You Forward'

With this fare increase, COTA will be able to:

■ Expand and improve service, adding new routes to enhance connectivity across the Commonwealth.

■ Ensure sustainability by funding to maintain and upgrade our fleet, facilities, and infrastructure.

■ Improve the overall experience for our riders, with more frequent service, cleaner buses, and a more reliable transit network.

Additionally, COTA would like to inform riders that any existing passes or tickets purchased before Jan. 1, 2025, will expire on March 31, 2025. Passholders or ticketholders are encouraged to take note of this expiration date and plan accordingly to avoid any inconvenience.

COTA understands that fare increases can be concerning, but this is a necessary step to ensure that COTA remains a sustainable and responsive public transportation option for all residents. By investing in the CNMI's transit system today, COTA is working toward a future where COTA can continue to grow, adapt, and serve our communities for years to come.

"We deeply appreciate the ongoing support and understanding of our riders, Disability Network Partners, and the community as we continue our efforts to provide safe, efficient, and affordable public transportation. Together, we can create a more connected and vibrant Commonwealth.

For more information on the updated fares and pass expiration dates, visit COTA's website at transit.cnmi.gov. You can also follow COTA on Facebook and Instagram at @TransitCNMI or contact the One-Call/One-Click Transportation Information Resource Center at (670) 236-2682.

COTA is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, and affordable public transportation to the Commonwealth's residents and visitors. Since 2013, we have been committed to serving our communities with high-quality transit services and continuing to work toward a more connected and sustainable future. ***(PR)***

Scheduled power service interruptions for Rota on Nov. 25, 26

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be scheduled power service interruptions on Monday, Nov. 25, and Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024.

Monday, Nov. 25, 2024

■ Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am-1:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Ginalangan Road

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Purpose: To allow CUC linemen to replace a wooden power pole and hardware.

Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024

■ Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 1:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Blue Bay Homes (see attached map with a yellow outline)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Purpose: To allow CUC linemen to replace a wooden power pole and hardware.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as the CUC Rota crew work to ensure reliable and safe services for its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Rota Office at (670) 532-9411 or 532-9414, visit CUC's website, and monitor its Facebook page for the latest updates. In case of an emergency, contact Customer Service at (670) 664-4282. ***(PR)***

CUC

The map of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled power service interruption Rota on Monday, Nov. 25.

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

AMENDMENT No. 2

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB) NMHC IFB 2025-001

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: ~~November 29, 2024~~ December 13, 2024, 2:00 p.m.

CONSTRUCTION OF CHILD CARE FACILITY IN ROTA

Project Package will be available on October 29, 2024, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

Brief description of the project package is available on the NMHC Website at www.nmhcgov.net "Procurement Tab".

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the Rota Mayors Office Conference Hall in Tatachog, Rota on ~~**November 13, 2024, 10:00 a.m.**~~ **November 20, 2024, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Acting-Corporate Director

/s/ Merced "Marcie" M. Tomokane
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-25-003

CONSTRUCTION OF AS MATUIS TEMPORARY TANK

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the construction of **a temporary water tank in As Matuis.**

The project consists of a temporary water tank in As Matuis with the furnishing of all labor, supervision, equipment and materials for a new temporary fiberglass tank located in As Matuis. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system. CUC requires the Project to be completed in Two Hundred Seventy (270) calendar days from date of award of contract.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Bidders must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **November 26, 2024 at 1:00 PM (CHST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hardcopies of the bid must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-25-003, Construction of As Matuis Temporary Tank" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (CHST) on December 19, 2024,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time.

Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from registered Proponents and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 a.m. (CHST) on December 3, 2024** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Marcela Tenorio, P&S, Senior Administrative Technician at marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and to waive any defects in said bid, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

KEVIN O. WATSON
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Officer

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Mark Rabago EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

US Senate must pass PRESS Act now

The U.S. Senate has little time left in this tumultuous year but it must make sure to pass the PRESS Act.

Dubbed "Protect Reporters from Exploitative State Spying Act," the broadly supported bill would ensure federal protection for journalists. It would prevent authorities from abusing subpoena powers and protect reporters from being forced to reveal their sources.

Similar press protections already exist in 49 states, including Washington since 2007.

Yet at the federal level, reporters are protected by a loose patchwork of court decisions and limited, impermanent administrative decrees.

The case of Catherine Herridge illustrates why permanent, federal protections are urgently needed.

The former Fox News and CBS reporter is facing substantial fines and potentially jail because she is refusing to reveal sources.

At Fox, Herridge revealed a federal investigation into a Chinese American scientist. The scientist sued the government, alleging privacy violations, and the judge in that case ordered Herridge to reveal how she obtained the information.

There is a qualified reporter's privilege in D.C. federal courts "but its scope is unclear and it could be read in a way to make it pretty weak," said Gabe Rottman, policy director at the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

If the PRESS Act were in place, the subpoenaing of Herridge wouldn't have been allowed, he said.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., deserves credit for sponsoring this bill and doggedly pursuing it for years.

His Washington state colleagues, Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, have been extraordinary supporters of the press and have leadership positions for the rest of 2024. They should use their influence to help get the PRESS Act done immediately.

This is not controversial. The PRESS Act is a commonsense bill, upholding widely held values of press freedom, with exceptions for extreme situations such as terrorism.

An identical bill passed unanimously in the House in January, demonstrating that both Republicans and Democrats support the free press and value the work of investigative journalists.

The necessity was explained well by U.S. Rep. Kevin Kiley, R-Calif., the House co-sponsor, in a statement after the House vote.

"Liberty depends on the freedom of the press," Kiley said. "Journalists are often the first to expose government fraud, waste, abuse and encroachments on personal freedoms."

Kiley further made the case.

"A critical aspect of the freedom of the press is the pursuit of truth without government entanglements or intimidation," he stated. "Administrations from both political parties have unjustly targeted journalists and used compulsory process to obtain information from them about their sources. Most states have protected journalists from such interference, and it is past time for Congress to do so as well."

Indeed. This should be a priority for Republicans coming

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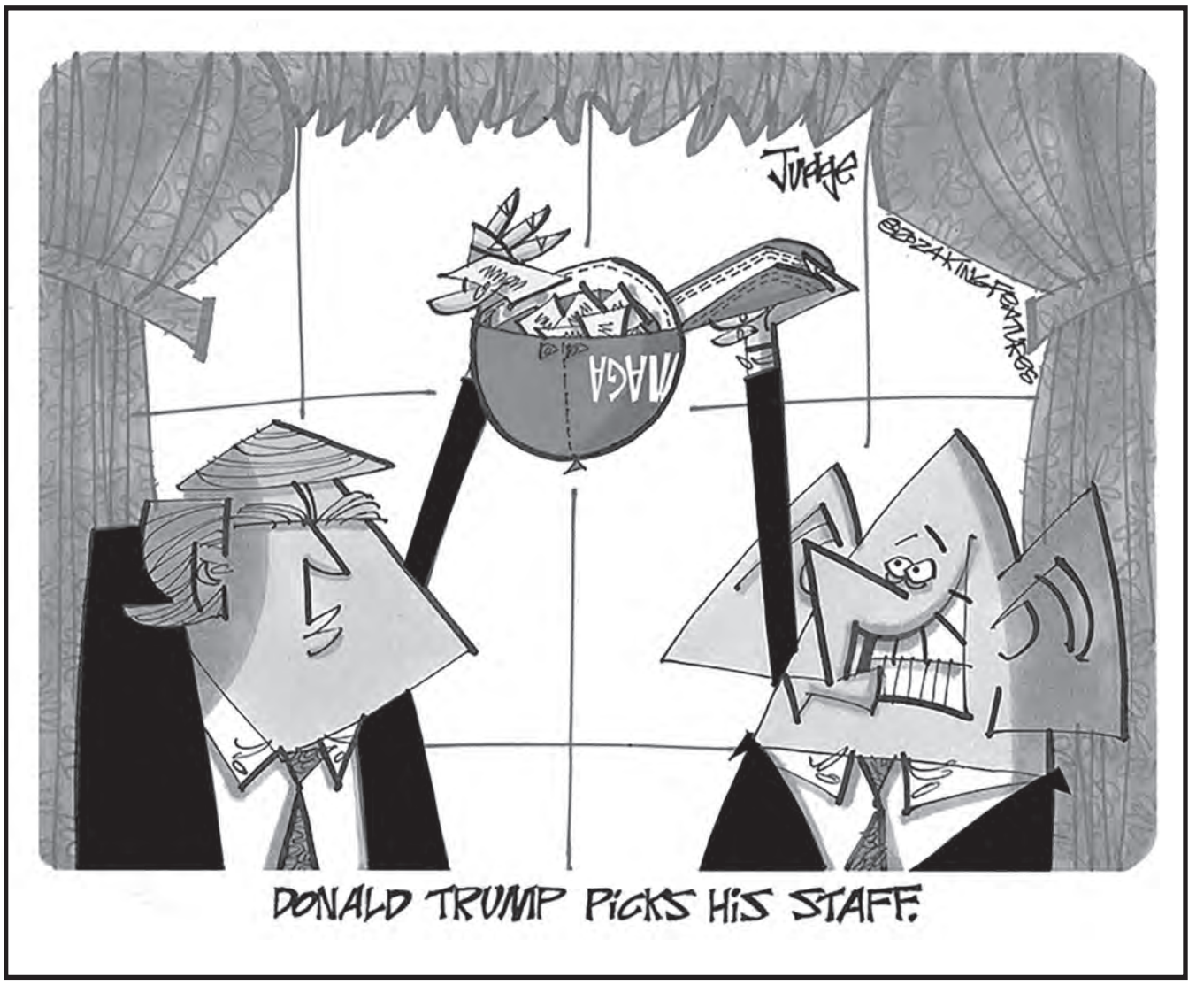

Evangelical Christians' long road to Donald Trump

By RANDALL BALMER
Los Angeles Times

Randall Balmer, author of "Bad Faith: Race and the Rise of the Religious Right," teaches at Dartmouth College.

We don't yet know the precise numbers, but it appears once again that four out of five white evangelicals voted for Donald Trump in the presidential election.

Evangelical support was by no means decisive; a similar percentage voted for Trump when he lost in 2020. But when a supermajority of a group that comprises approximately 25% of the population falls into your column, that's a pretty good foundation upon which to build a winning coalition.

Trump promised to be their protector against a range of supposed enemies, to advance white evangelical fever dreams of Christian nationalism. Until he realized that the recission of Roe vs. Wade was unpopular with a majority of Americans, Trump crowed about having appointed justices who did exactly that.

Still, the anomaly of a movement that professes allegiance to "family values" supporting a thrice-married, self-confessed sexual predator, not to mention a convicted felon, cannot be ignored.

But 2024, let alone 2016 or 2020, was not the first time white evangelicals shoved aside their putative values to support a presidential candidate.

In the late 1970s, divorce was considered taboo in evangelical circles, especially divorce and remarriage. Anyone in that category would very likely lose membership in his or her church. Nevertheless, evangelicals, led by Jerry Falwell and other leaders of the religious right, chose to anoint the divorced and remarried Ronald Reagan as their political messiah in 1980. Worse, as governor of California back in 1967, Reagan had signed the most liberal abortion bill in the country, adding to the puzzle.

So why would evangelicals forsake one of their own, Jimmy Carter, a born-again Christian Sunday school teacher and family man, in favor of Reagan?

The answer is not pretty—and it's the same reason that helps to explain white evangelical support for Trump: racism.

Contrary to the religious right's own narrative, white evangelicals did not organize politically in the 1970s in opposition to Roe v. Wade. The Southern Baptist Convention, in fact, passed a resolution in 1971 calling for the legalization of abortion, a resolution they reaffirmed in 1974 and again in 1976. Evangelicals overwhelmingly considered abortion a Catholic issue throughout the 1970s, and the few evangelicals who commented on the Roe decision applauded it as marking an appropriate distinction between personal morality and public policy.

So what did mobilize evangelicals politically? The catalyst, according to historical records as well as the testimony of such conservative leaders as Paul Weyrich, cofounder of the Moral Majority; Richard Viguerie, Christian right direct-mail king; and Grover Norquist, antitax hound, was the defense of racial segregation at evangelical "segregation academies" and institutions, including Bob Jones University in South Carolina.

Falwell, who by his own admission did not preach his first antiabortion sermon until Feb. 26, 1978, more than five years after the Roe decision, had founded his own segregation academy in 1967. Having famously decried the civil rights movement as "civil wrongs," he was incensed that the Internal Revenue Service might rescind his tax exemption because of racial segregation and complained that in some places it was easier to open a massage parlor than a "Christian" school.

Reagan, like Trump decades later, was their man to stand up to the nefarious forces seeking to destroy what they were selling as evangelicalism.

Reagan had opposed the Rumford Fair Housing Act in California, which banned discrimination in the purchase and rental of housing. He was an outspoken opponent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. His campaigns were littered with racist dog whistles, especially "law and order" and "welfare queens." He opened his 1980 general election campaign for the presidency in Neshoba County, Mississippi, declaring his support for "states' rights" in the place where in 1964

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EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Truth 71: As for our future and greatness!

By AMBROSE M. BENNETT
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Ambrose M. Bennett is an economist who minored in sociology, political scientist, a retired teacher, and former CNMI Board of Education member, a James Madison Fellow (U.S. constitutional scholar), a Fulbright-Hays and lifetime humanities scholar who resides in Kagman III in the CNMI.

The truth of the matter is that I get it, the desire for a white conservative America is real and now in power. While we must accept the results of the election and do our best to continue to contribute to solving the many problems of America on the mainland and here in the CNMI, we know there is trouble waiting just down the road but the great thing about trouble is trouble can't last always, as my MaDear would say.

For the mainland it looks four years before real progress and great things for the average American while the rich will be getting richer but it's only two years before we have an opportunity in the CNMI to address and even change our leadership for the better to real change and progress. Our economy and quality of life in the CNMI won't automatically change because of the election, as we are virtually in the same place economically and our quality of life as we were two years ago when the present administration took office. In fact, it's worse, with the cost of living which is why I've been screaming economist for the past two years—duh! One must ask, what has been or is being done to really overhaul our economic engine (new/replacement economic features) that will fuel our economy/economic growth. It seems that we are just "waiting to see what is going to happen instead of making sure things happen." It's obvious the governor is putting a lot of real estate in the military build-up in the CNMI but as Chris says at MVA "Tourism is Our Business," so what is being done about our tourism industry? Heck, now we can't even get pass IPI to resurrect Garapan due to the Commonwealth Casino Commission playing games to keep sitting and hoping they can get paid eventually.

But there are virtually two kinds of politicians, those who watch things happening and those who make things happen, as we know the ones who make things happen are often considered the great politician, which is what the political doctors (scientists) are prescribing for the CNMI—a great politician! But great politicians are rare and few, which is why, with no disrespect intended, the CNMI has yet to experience that truly great leader that have evolved on the mainland. So, the question is, who wants to and who is willing to do the work to accomplish great things for the people of the CNMI, as the opportunity for greatness is virtually everywhere you look within our society from the cost of living to the need for a robust tourism industry to fund our government.

We just had an election, and I didn't hear anything that even hinted to making the CNMI great which tells me the CNMI is in desperate need of a great leader who will actually do something to improve our economy and quality of life. I have great hopes for our new delegate to be successful but a lot of her success with our economy will depend on our government doing its part, as asking for CW assistance from the feds when we have yet to create a real systemic workforce transition plan will surely hurt her efforts.

All of our newly elected leaders have a clean slate with the opportunity for greatness and for true the people are going to be watching now more than ever given our declining tourism Industry and with the election for governor being just around the corner now. In fact, I heard the Democrats' acting chair started working on the 2026 election the day after the election. But we as a people must also start doing our due diligence as citizens which is really simple to do. Be an informed citizen knowing what our governor and Legislature have done and failed to do and be active in sharing your knowledge with other citizens who may not know so that when election day comes you are ready to make the right and best decision for all of us and the CNMI. So, buckle your seatbelts for the next four years on the mainland it's going to be a rough one and for the next two years in the CNMI and be ready, come 2026 that will be here before you know it. Who will finally desire to be great for the CNMI and step up to the plate to hit a homerun(s) for the people.

EVANGELICAL

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three civil rights workers were abducted, tortured and murdered by members of the Ku Klux Klan in collusion with the local sheriff's office.

President Reagan would go on to sign the federal Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988, but that didn't stop him from decimating the Civil Rights Commission or from maintaining his support— by opposing sanctions — for the apartheid government in South Africa, even as the regime was collapsing beneath its own weight.

White evangelicals did not shy away from Reagan and his racist rhetoric or policies. They lionized him.

And so too with Trump. The bigoted "birther" nonsense directed against President Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, in itself should have prompted white evangelical leaders to sound the alarm against him, not to mention Trump's recognition of "some very fine people" at a white supremacist rally or the torrent of insults directed against African Americans, especially Black women, and immigrants. Instead, they have enthusiastically supported Trump in all three of his campaigns for the White House.

Does that mean that every "Bible-believing" Christian who voted for Trump is racist? No, not at all. But there's a link between the origins of the religious right in defense of racial segregation and the overwhelming white evangelical support for a candidate who traffics in racialized rhetoric.

That link includes Reagan, but it also encompasses minor characters like Roy Moore, former chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, who declared that America was great during slavery because "families were united." It includes Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council and his history of interactions with the Ku Klux Klan and the Council of Conservative Citizens, also known as the "uptown Klan."

The racism infecting the religious right extends back to its formation in the late 1970s. And because unrepented racism tends to fester, the 2024 election demonstrated once again that white evangelicals have yet to acknowledge or repent of the persistent racism that animates their politics.

SENATE

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into power and focused on rooting out government waste, and for Democrats concerned about the resilience of democratic institutions and checks and balances.

In addition to making sure the press can do its job, Congress also has an obligation to ensure the press survives.

Also awaiting passage are bipartisan proposals to save newsroom jobs with tax credits (the Community News and Small Business Support Act) and give publishers a fighting chance against monopolistic tech companies (the Journalism Competition and Preservation Act).

Get the PRESS Act done now.

Then build on its consensus to pass the other journalism bills, to protect and ensure the survival of America's independent, free press system.

©2024 The Seattle Times

Red Caesarism: The radical retinue will continue

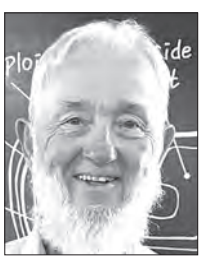
MAGA: Meaning and a modicum of mirth

From a Siegfried Sassoon online site article titled, "What does MAGA stand for? "A political belief related to crypto-fascism that supports nation and race above individual freedom, the use of lies and wedge issues to control low information citizens, rejects democracy and instead seeks to create an autocracy headed by a dictatorial autocratic leader, employs the violent suppression of opposition parties, and is controlled by foreign powers who maintain a financial or blackmail relationship with the leaders of the movement.

Based on the acronym for Make America Great Again, the slogan had no serious association with fascism until it was adopted by Christine O'Donnell for her unsuccessful 2010 effort to gain the Senate seat vacated by Joe Biden. In 2011 she used the term to support her pro-fascism treatise "Troublemaker: Let's Do What It Takes to Make America Great Again." Donald Trump's political handlers fed the line "Make America Great Again" for a speech in December of 2011, lifting it from O'Donnell's unsuccessful book. It remained in the background of the Trump media efforts to position him for president, but in 2015 was adopted and registered, being used as a sample of reversing the narrative typical for American campaigns to define traditional personal freedom as evil, multiculturalism, and pluralism as damaging America's white Christian image, and associating the massive advance in American standard of living (1950 to 2010) with unwanted change, often advocating a return to an America of 1855. Shortly after it was adopted, Russian-based troll farms, seeking to break America's collective will, began to support the saying, followed quickly by fascist news groups and finally the Trump campaign's increasing use of the term as a stand in for increasing violence."

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey Connolly aka "Pepe Batbon" is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is the Poet Laureate of Tinian and enjoys stargazing.

MAGAMANDIAS The Malignant—A tragicomic modicum of mirth

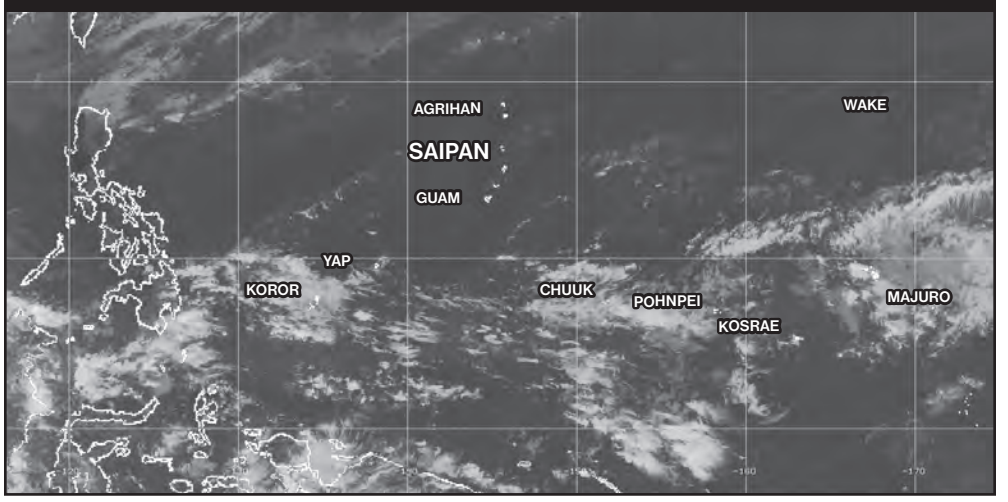
Magamandias the Malignant, XLVII King of Bullshot and Bling
MAGA: Make America Great Again, Many Americans Gag Again
Maga man Deus—Mega man God, Maga man Dias— Maga man Days
Who daily recites a litany of ludicrous lies and assiduous acrimony
Who leads off talking trash with braggadocio, bullshot, and baloney
Maga man Deus Caesar likes to play grab ass, grab it, squeeze her
Maga man Deus Caesar new buddy # 1 Elon Musk, billionaire teaser
Maga man Deus Caesar flounders with his cabinet choices, old geezer
(In Japanese language Maga means "witch," it also means confusion, complication, distortion. MAGATOTO means evil things in Japanese.)
Maga man MAGATOTO, his modus operandi a world of deep delusion
His hyperbolic frolics make democracy a living hell right here on earth
Magamandias usual method of madness is most always malignant mirth
We know his quasilegal 'dictatorial' reign will make life on earth worse
People want their wish to come true and put him in a different universe.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny. East northeast wind 15 to 18 mph, with gusts as high as 24 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.	Mostly sunny. East northeast wind 14 to 17 mph, with gusts as high as 22 mph.	Mostly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.	A chance of showers. Partly sunny.
87° 77°	87° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°	88° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 5:18 AM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Minor edits to the forecast this morning. The dry trade-wind regime continues today with spotty showers. Have sped up the passage of a trade-wind trough, with scattered showers beginning later tonight and continuing through Monday night. Increased mid to upper-level moisture and upper-level support look to bring potential for isolated thunderstorms. Beginning Wednesday, a surface trough and higher moisture will drift north through the Marianas and bring an increased potential for showers and thunderstorms through the end of the work week.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Sunny	85° / 79°
Palau	Sunny	84° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Sunny	87° / 76°
Kosrae	Sunny	86° / 76°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:23 AM	5:43 PM
Tuesday	6:24 AM	5:44 PM
Wednesday	6:24 AM	5:44 PM
Thursday	6:25 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:26 AM	5:44 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	1:21 AM	1:48 PM	-
Tuesday	2:06 AM	2:20 PM	-
Wednesday	2:52 AM	2:53 PM	-
Thursday	3:38 AM	3:27 PM	-
Friday	4:26 AM	4:05 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	66° / 55°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	50° / 39°
Hong Kong	Sunny	81° / 70°
Honolulu	Windy	85° / 75°
London	Showers	46° / 39°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	66° / 53°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	72° / 52°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	78° / 72°
New York	Mostly Sunny	54° / 45°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	61° / 45°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	48° / 41°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	66° / 50°
Rome	Showers	57° / 50°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	68° / 50°
San Francisco	Sunny	60° / 48°
Seoul	Sunny	59° / 39°
Tokyo	Rain	54° / 48°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	53° / 47°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:57 AM	High Tide	1.11
9:09 AM	Low Tide	0.42
4:08 PM	High Tide	1.64
10:55 PM	Low Tide	0.54

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	1:20PM	4:00PM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily
UA193	7:55PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:30AM	6:25AM	Daily
7C3212	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX77	3:05AM	5:55AM	1, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	5:30PM	10:05PM	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	00:40AM	6:25AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:40AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184	00:40AM	8:50AM	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:50AM +1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3407	11:20PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3211	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	8:00PM	1:30AM+1	Daily

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

HX76	6:25PM	1:35AM+1	4, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

GRMC introduces capsule endoscopy service

GRMC

Guam Regional Medical City's advanced capsule endoscopy service is expected to reduce travel needs for patients seeking specialized GI diagnostics and provide doctors with precise imaging that aids in early diagnosis and treatment planning.

Guam Regional Medical City is proud to announce the launch of an advanced capsule endoscopy service, offering a new, minimally invasive solution for digestive health diagnostics. This service represents a significant advancement in gastrointestinal healthcare for Guam and the surrounding region, bringing innovative medical technology and improved patient comfort to the forefront. Supported by a grant from the USDA Rural Development Program, this new service underscores the commitment of GRMC and local leadership to advancing healthcare access and quality for Guam's residents.

Capsule endoscopy offers a convenient, patient-friendly alternative to traditional endoscopic procedures by allowing patients to ingest a small, pill-sized camera, which captures detailed images of the gastrointestinal tract as it passes through the digestive system. This approach is particularly effective for detecting and diagnosing conditions, such as Crohn's disease, small intestine bleeding, and other GI issues without the need for sedation or invasive techniques. Unique to this project is the seamless integration of telemedicine into the capsule endoscopy procedure through technology developed by the specialty company GI Digital, called "Tele-GI."

Not only can the video created by the capsule be analyzed remotely, ultimately the capsule could be ingested at the home of the patient or in their community, further increasing the convenience.

The USDA has awarded the University of Southern California a Telehealth and Distance Learning Grant to enable providers in Guam to leverage GI Digital's proprietary Tele-GI infrastructure. GI Digital is also the telecommunications contractor assigned to facilitate the telemedical integrations between GRMC, USC, and any other stakeholder.

"We are thrilled to offer this new diagnostic tool, which provides a less invasive, more comfortable experience for patients," said Dr. Alexander "Beau" Wielaard, GRMC CEO. "With the support of the USDA, we are expanding access to state-of-the-art medical services that directly benefit our community's health and wellness."

The USDA has highlighted this development as part of its broader commitment to enhancing Guam's healthcare infrastructure. "Our department is proud to support GRMC in bringing such advanced technology to Guam," said Robert Machado, General Field Representative United States Department of Agriculture. "This service aligns with our goal of making high-quality healthcare accessible on the island, and it demonstrates the kind of progress we aim to bring to our community's healthcare system."

Capsule endoscopy is expected to reduce travel needs for patients seeking specialized GI diagnostics and provide doctors with precise imaging that aids in early diagnosis and treatment planning. This service is expected to provide greater convenience and care for residents by allowing them to access specialized GI diagnostics locally, without the need for extensive travel.

All reports generated from the procedure will receive a final review and signoff from Dr. Paul Muña Aguon, Guam's sole licensed gastroenterologist.

"I am genuinely excited about the collaboration amongst our hospitals and the strides we are making to enhance GI care through the new capsule endoscopy program. This innovative service brings advanced diagnostic options within reach for everyone in Guam, representing a significant step forward in accessible, high-quality gastrointestinal healthcare for our entire community," adds Aguon.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, patients and referring physicians can contact the GRMC Referral Office at (671) 633-GRMC (4762) or visit https://www.grmc.gu/

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas.

GI Digital Inc. is a leading provider of innovative Tele-GI solutions, focused on making advanced gastrointestinal diagnostics more accessible. Through its proprietary workflow management platform, along with leveraging artificial intelligence, GI Digital plays a critical role in the early detection of gastrointestinal diseases, including colorectal cancer. GI Digital collaborates with healthcare providers across the U.S., Canada, and Europe to expand access to high-quality GI diagnostics and transform care delivery through its scalable Tele-GI products and solutions. ***(PR)***

Nation

Trump taps Rollins as agriculture chief

WASHINGTON (AP)—President-elect Donald Trump said Saturday that he will nominate former White House aide Brooke Rollins to be his agriculture secretary, the last of his picks to lead executive agencies and another choice from within his established circle of advisers and allies.

The nomination must be confirmed by the Senate, which will be controlled by Republicans when Trump takes office Jan. 20, 2025. Rollins would succeed Tom Vilsack, President Joe Biden's agriculture secretary who oversees the sprawling agency that controls policies, regulations and aid programs related to farming, forestry, ranching, food quality and nutrition.

Rollins, who graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in agricultural development, is a longtime Trump associate who served as his former domestic policy chief. She is president and CEO of the America First Policy Institute, a group helping to lay the groundwork for a second Trump administration.

» Completing proposed slate of Cabinet secretaries

Rollins, 52, previously served as an aide to former Texas Gov. Rick Perry and ran a think tank, the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

Rollins' pick completes Trump's selection of the heads of executive branch departments, just two and a half weeks after the former president won the White House once again. Several other picks that are traditionally Cabinet-level remain, including U.S. Trade Representative and head of the small business administration.

Trump didn't offer many specifics about his agriculture policies during the campaign, but farmers could be affected if he carries out his pledge to impose widespread tariffs. During the first Trump administration, countries like China responded to Trump's tariffs by imposing retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports like the corn and soybeans routinely sold overseas. Trump countered by offering massive multibillion-dollar aid to farmers to help them weather the trade war.

President Abraham Lincoln founded the USDA in 1862, when about half of all Americans lived on farms. The USDA oversees multiple support programs for farmers; animal and plant health; and the safety of meat, poultry and eggs that anchor the nation's food supply. Its federal nutrition programs provide food to low-income people, pregnant women and young children. And the agency sets standards for school meals.

Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Trump's nominee to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, has vowed to strip ultraprocessed foods from school lunches and to stop allowing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program beneficiaries from using food stamps to buy soda, candy or other so-called junk foods. But it would be the USDA, not HHS, that would be responsible for enacting those changes.

In addition, HHS and USDA will work together to finalize the 2025-2030 edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. They are due late next year, with guidance for healthy diets and standards for federal nutrition programs.

Voters rejected historic election reforms across US

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP)—Two weeks before Election Day, activists from across the country gathered for an online rally heralding the historic number of state ballot initiatives seeking to change the way people vote. Hopes were high that voters would ditch traditional partisan primaries and embrace ballots with more candidate choices.

Instead, the election reform movement lost almost everywhere it appeared on a statewide ballot.

"It turns out, in retrospect, we weren't yet ready for prime time," said John Opdycke, president of the advocacy group Open Primaries, which organized the rally.

In Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Oregon and South Dakota—a mixture of red, blue and purple states — voters rejected either ranked choice voting, open primaries or a combination of both.

The open primary proposals sought to place candidates of all parties on the same ballot, with a certain number of top finishers advancing to the general election. Under ranked choice voting, people can vote for multiple candidates in order of preference. If no one receives a majority of first place votes, then candidates who receive the fewest votes are eliminated and their votes redistributed to people's next choices.

Election reform advocates raised about $110 million for the statewide ballot measures, vastly outpacing their opponents, according to an Associated Press analysis of campaign finance figures that could grow even larger as post-election reports are filed. Still, their promotional push wasn't enough to persuade most voters.

"While Americans are frustrated with politics, I think most Americans are just fine with the traditional way of voting," said Trent England, executive director of Save Our States, which opposes ranked choice voting.

Advocates for alternative election methods had thought momentum was on their side after Alaska voters narrowly approved a combination of open primaries and ranked choice voting in 2020. Then voters in Nevada—where initiatives proposing constitutional amendments require approval in two consecutive elections—gave first-round approval to a similar measure in 2022. But Nevada voters reversed course this year.

In Alaska, an attempt this year to repeal open primaries and ranked choice voting appears to have fallen just short of passing, garnering 49.9% support in results released Wednesday. Final results are expected to be certified Nov. 30.

In addition to Alaska, versions of ranked choice voting already exist in Maine 's federal elections and about 50 counties or cities. Voters in Washington, D.C., and the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois, both approved ranked choice voting this November. And voters in the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington, Minnesota, reaffirmed their use of it.

World

Putin says Russia attacked Ukraine with new missile he claims West can't stop

The Kremlin fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile at Ukraine on Thursday in response to Kyiv's use this week of American and British missiles capable of striking deeper into Russia, President Vladimir Putin said.

In a televised address to the country, the Russian president warned that U.S. air defense systems would be powerless to stop the new missile, which he said flies at ten times the speed of sound and which he called the Oreshnik — Russian for hazelnut tree. He also said it could be used to attack any Ukrainian ally whose missiles are used to attack Russia.

"We believe that we have the right to use our weapons against military facilities of the countries that allow to use their weapons against our facilities," Putin said in his first comments since President Joe Biden gave Ukraine the green light this month to use U.S. ATACMS missiles to strike at limited targets inside Russia.

Pentagon deputy press secretary Sabrina Singh confirmed that Russia's missile was a new, experimental type of intermediate range missile based on it's RS-26 Rubezh intercontinental ballistic missile.

AP

In this screen grab from a video provided by the Come Back Alive Foundation on Nov. 21, 2024, lights are seen in the sky during a Russian attack on Dnipro, Ukraine.

"This was new type of lethal capability that was deployed on the battlefield, so that was certainly of concern," Singh said, noting that the missile could carry either conventional or nuclear warheads. The U.S. was notified ahead of the launch through nuclear risk reduction channels, she said.

The attack on the central Ukrainian city of Dnipro came in response to Kyiv's use of longer-range U.S. and British missiles in strikes Tuesday and Wednesday on southern Russia, Putin said. Those strikes caused a fire at an ammunition depot in Russia's Bryansk region and killed and wounded some security services personnel in the Kursk region, he said.

"In the event of an escalation of aggressive actions, we will respond decisively and in kind," the Russian president said, adding that Western leaders who are hatching plans to use their forces against Moscow should "seriously think about this."

Putin said the Oreshnik fired Thursday struck a well-known missile factory in Dnipro. He also said Russia would issue advance warnings if it launches more strikes with the Oreshnik against Ukraine to allow civilians to evacuate to safety—something Moscow hasn't done before previous aerial attacks.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov initially said Russia hadn't warned the U.S. about the coming launch of the new missile, noting that it wasn't obligated to do so. But he later changed tack and said Moscow did issue a warning 30 minutes before the launch.

Putin's announcement came hours after Ukraine claimed that Russia had used an intercontinental ballistic missile in the Dnipro attack, which wounded two people and damaged an industrial facility and rehabilitation center for people with disabilities, according to local officials. But American officials said an initial U.S. assessment indicated the strike was carried out with an intermediate-range ballistic missile.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post that the use of the missile was an "obvious and serious escalation in the scale and brutality of this war, a cynical violation of the UN Charter."

He also said there had been "no strong global reaction" to the use of the missile, which he said could threaten other countries.

"Putin is very sensitive to this. He is testing you, dear partners," Zelenskyy wrote. "If there is no tough response to Russia's actions, it means they see that such actions are possible." ***(AP)***

PH vice president publicly threatens to have president assassinated

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte said Saturday she has contracted an assassin to kill the president, his wife and the House of Representatives speaker if she herself is killed, in a brazen public threat that she warned was not a joke.

Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin referred the "active threat" against President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to an elite presidential guards force "for immediate proper action." It was not immediately clear what actions would be taken against the vice president.

The Presidential Security Command immediately boosted Marcos' security and said it considered the vice president's threat, which was "made so brazenly in public," a national security issue.

The security force said it was "coordinating with law enforcement agencies to detect, deter, and defend against any and all threats to the president and the first family."

Marcos ran with Duterte as his vice-presidential running mate in the May 2022 elections and both won with landslide victories on a campaign call of national unity.

The two leaders and their camps, however, rapidly had a bitter falling-out over key differences, including in their approaches to China's aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea. Duterte resigned from the Marcos Cabinet in June as education secretary and head of an anti-insurgency body.

Like her equally outspoken father, former President Rodrigo Duterte, the vice president became a vocal critic of Marcos, his wife Liza Araneta-Marcos and House Speaker Martin Romualdez, the president's ally and cousin, accusing them of corruption, incompetence and politically persecuting the Duterte family and its close supporters.

Her latest tirade was set off by the decision by House members allied with Romualdez and Marcos to detain her chief of staff, Zuleika Lopez, who was accused of hampering a congressional inquiry into the possible misuse of her budget as vice president and education secretary. Lopez was later transferred to a hospital after falling ill and wept when she heard of a plan to temporarily lock her up in a women's prison.

In a pre-dawn online news conference, an angry Sara Duterte accused Marcos of incompetence as a president and of being a liar, along with his wife and the House speaker in expletives-laden remarks.

When asked about concerns over her security, the 46-year-old lawyer suggested there was an unspecified plot to kill her. "Don't worry about my security because I've talked with somebody. I said 'if I'm killed, you'll kill BBM, Liza Araneta and Martin Romualdez. No joke, no joke,'" the vice president said without elaborating and using the initials that many use to call the president.

"I've given my order, 'If I die, don't stop until you've killed them.' And he said, 'yes,'" the vice president said.

Under the Philippine penal code, such public remarks may constitute a crime of threatening to inflict a wrong on a person or his family and is punishable by a jail term and fine.

Amid the political divisions, military chief Gen. Romeo Brawner issued a statement with an assurance that the 160,000-member Armed Forces of the Philippines would remain nonpartisan "with utmost respect for our democratic institutions and civilian authority."

WORLD BRIEFS

Israeli strikes in central Beirut kill at least 20 as diplomats push for a cease-fire

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Israeli airstrikes Saturday in central Beirut killed at least 20 people, officials said, as the once-rare attacks on the heart of Lebanon's capital continued without warning while diplomats scrambled to broker a cease-fire. Lebanon's Health Ministry said 66 people were wounded in the strikes, which were the fourth in central Beirut in less than a week. The escalation comes after U.S. envoy Amos Hochstein traveled to the region in pursuit of a deal to end months of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah that has erupted into full-on war. Israeli attacks have killed more than 3,500 people in Lebanon, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. The fighting has displaced about 1.2 million people, or a quarter of Lebanon's population. On the Israeli side, about 90 soldiers and nearly 50 civilians have been killed by bombardment in northern Israel and the fighting.

NATO head and Trump meet in Florida for talks on global security

BRUSSELS (AP)—U.S. President-elect Donald Trump and the head of NATO have met for talks on global security, the military alliance said Saturday. In a brief statement, NATO said Trump and its secretary general, Mark Rutte, met on Friday in Palm Beach, Florida. "They discussed the range of global security issues facing the Alliance," the statement said without giving details. It appeared to be Rutte's first meeting with Trump since his Nov. 5 election. Rutte had previously congratulated Trump and said "his leadership will again be key to keeping our Alliance strong" and that he looked forward to working with him. Trump has for years expressed skepticism about the Western alliance and complained about the defense spending of many of its member nations, which he regarded as too low. He depicted NATO allies as leeches on the U.S. military and openly questioned the value of the alliance that has defined American foreign policy for decades. He threatened not to defend NATO members that fail to meet defense-spending goals.

UN climate talks to decide on a deal for at least $300B for poor nations

BAKU, Azerbaijan (AP)—Negotiators will soon decide whether to accept a proposed $300 billion funding package for poor nations to curb and adapt to climate change—a plan hammered out early Sunday by the head of fractured United Nations climate talks. The deal to be presented to nations of "at least $300 billion by 2035" is a compromise between the $1.3 trillion a year developing countries seek to adapt to climate change and wean off fossil fuels and the current $100 billion amount. Evans Njewa, the chair of the Least Developed Countries negotiating bloc of nearly 50 countries, wouldn't comment specifically on the latest figure, but said "it's a good value and we hope we can do better." The latest figure appears to be something that Fiji can live with, its delegation chief Biman Prasad told The Associated Press. "Everybody is committed to having an agreement," Prasad said. "They are not necessarily happy about everything, but the bottom line is everybody wants a good agreement." "While wealthy, polluting countries should have committed to a higher amount, this is a floor not a ceiling.

Life & Style

Kendrick Lamar surprises with new album 'GNX'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kendrick Lamar gave music listeners an early holiday present Friday with the surprise drop of a new album.

The Grammy winner's 12-track "GNX" is his first release since 2022's "Mr. Morale & The Big Steppers" and his sixth studio album overall. It also comes just months after his rap battle with Drake.

Lamar first teased the album with a cover art and video snippet of "GNX," which features multi-instrumentalist Jack Antonoff as a co-producer on every track except for "Peekaboo." Other notable producers include Sounwave and DJ Mustard, who both contributed production on the hit "Not Like Us," the ubiquitous diss track emanating from the Drake feud.

Lamar's former Top Dawg Entertainment labelmate SZA appears on a couple songs including "Gloria" and "Luther," which also features sampled vocals from Luther Vandross and Cheryl Lynn through "If This World Were Mine."

On the opening track "Wacced Out Murals," Lamar raps about cruising in his Buick GNX (Grand National Experimental) car with listening to Anita Baker. He brings up Snoop Dogg posting Drake's AI-assisted "Taylor Made Freestyle" diss track on social media and

AP

Kendrick Lamar performs during the Festival d'ete de Quebec in Quebec City, Canada on July 7, 2017.

Nas congratulating Lamar for being selected to headline February's Apple Music Super Bowl Halftime Show in New Orleans.

Lamar also shows admiration for Lil Wayne, who expressed his hurt feelings after being passed over as the headliner in his hometown.

Lamar, 37, has experienced massive success since his debut album "good kid, m.A.A.d city" in 2012. Since then, he's accumulated 17 Grammy wins and became the first non-classical, non-jazz musician to win a Pulitzer Prize for his 2017 album "DAMN."

Combs' third bid to be released on bail won't be decided until next week

NEW YORK (AP)—Sean "Diddy" Combs ' lawyers tried for a third time Friday to persuade a judge to let the hip-hop mogul out of jail while he awaits his sex trafficking trial, but a decision won't come until next week as prosecutors warned of his "concerted effort" from behind bars to disrupt the case.

U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian said he'll rule promptly on Combs' bail request after the defense and prosecution file letters by noon Monday fleshing out some of the arguments they made during at a two-hour hearing in Manhattan federal court.

Combs' lawyers pitched having him await trial under around-the-clock surveillance either at his mansion on an island near Miami Beach or—after the judge scoffed at that location—at an apartment on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

Their $50 million bail proposal, secured by his Florida home, essentially amounts to keeping Combs on house arrest instead of in custody at the troubled Brooklyn federal jail where he's been held for 67 days since his September arrest.

Under their plan, Combs' lawyers said he'll be under near-total restrictions on his ability to see or contact anyone but them. But prosecutors argued that no bail conditions can mitigate Combs' "risk of obstruction and dangerousness to others."

Combs has routinely flouted jail rules while locked up at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, prosecutors said, accusing him of attempting to interfere with witnesses and taint the jury pool.

"Really, this amounts to the defendant paying his way out of custody," Assistant U.S. Attorney Christy Slavik told Subramanian.

Defense lawyer Anthony Ricco countered that the prosecution's portrayal of Combs as "a lawless person who doesn't follow instructions" or "an out-of-control individual who has to be detained" is inaccurate.

Another Combs lawyer, Teny Geragos, added that given the strict release conditions they've proposed, "it would be impossible for him not to follow rules."

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to charges that he coerced and abused women for years with help from a network of associates and employees while silencing victims through blackmail and violence, including kidnapping, arson and physical beatings.

His trial is slated to begin May 5.

Two other judges previously concluded that the Bad Boy Records founder would be a danger to the community if he is freed, and an appeals court judge last month denied Combs' immediate release while a three-judge panel of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals weighs his bail request.

Christmas TV movies are in their Taylor Swift era, with two Swift-inspired films airing this year

Two new Christmas TV movies have a Taylor Swift connection that her fans would have no problem decoding.

"Christmas in the Spotlight" debuts Saturday on Lifetime. It stars Jessica Lord as the world's biggest pop star and Laith Wallschleger as a pro football player, who meet and fall in love—not unlike Swift and her boyfriend, Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce.

"It's clearly inspired by Taylor and Travis, but I don't know them and I don't know what is going on behind the scenes. I only know what's been put out there," said Eirene Tran Donohue, a longtime, devoted fan who jumped at the opportunity to write a script even loosely based on her favorite musician.

She was inspired by the couple's support of each other's accomplishments, particularly Kelce's ease with dating the star despite the glare of the spotlight, adding, "I love the way that he celebrates her."

AP

Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce (87) kisses Taylor Swift after the Kansas City Chiefs defeated the San Francisco 49ers at the Super Bowl on Feb. 11, 2024, in Las Vegas.

Tran Donohue wants fellow Swift fans to know she wrote the script with them in mind.

"There are so many Easter eggs," she said of little details added that a Swift fan would pick up on. "I put in as many as I could."

Teen wields sharp tongue toward female relatives

DEAR ABBY: I have had a falling out with my sister over her 13-year-old son, my nephew. He is generally a happy child, with everything a boy could want in moderation. My sister is separated from his father. She has primary custody, but they do have a co-parenting relationship.

My nephew respects and obeys his father, but he treats my sister like crap. He yells at her and his grandmother, constantly talks back, etc. When he tried it on me, I put him in his place with some choice words. My sister took offense, and we argued over it. I think he needs clear consequences for disrespecting adults. Instead, my sister makes excuses for why he behaves this way—"He didn't sleep well last night. He's upset about X-Y-Z," etc.

I know I'm armchair parenting, but I cannot stand to see this child yell at my sister or elderly mother, and I will not tolerate that behavior toward me. We end up arguing every time I try to talk to her about it. I have stopped spending time with them because of it. Advice, please.

OLD-SCHOOL AUNTIE

DEAR AUNTIE: Your nephew may act out because he is entering his turbulent teens, and this is a phase. It could also be that his mother has yet to make him suffer the consequences for his disrespectful behavior toward you and his grandmother.

Since your sister and her ex are co-parenting, they should BOTH be talking to their son about "respect." His grandmother also has a tongue, and she shouldn't tolerate her grandson's bad behavior, either. Personally, I would handle it by avoiding the kid until he straightens up, which may take forever.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: A dear friend of 12 years recently lost her beloved dog (who she called her third child) to old age. She chose to put the dog down because of health problems and has been racked with guilt ever since.

I lost my 19-year-old son 10 years ago to suicide. This has been the worst decade of my life, and I grieve for him every day. My friend has been equating the death of her pet to the death of my son, which has caused a major rift in our relationship. It is not only insulting but also beyond hurtful to me to hear that the passing of a pet is as painful and tragic as the loss of my son.

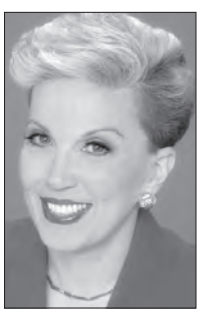
I have told her time and time again there is no comparing the loss of a human child to the loss of a canine "child," yet she continues to disagree. How should I deal with her and this situation? Your advice would be greatly appreciated.

GRIEVING MOM IN THE SOUTH

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR GRIEVING MOM: I will cut your friend some slack because she's in pain right now, but she's deluded. The pain of sending a beloved pet across the Rainbow Bridge and that of losing a child are not comparable, and for her to have said it —not only once but to harp on it—is ridiculous. The best way to deal with this woman would be to distance yourself until she regains some perspective.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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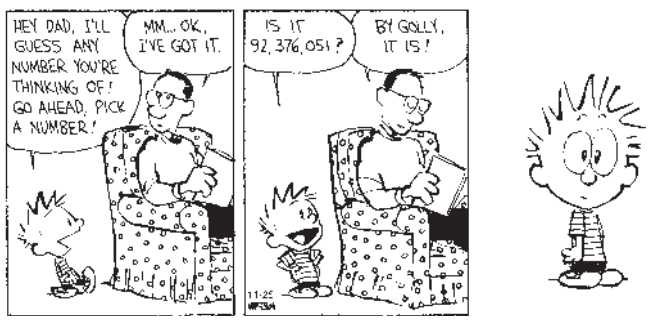
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

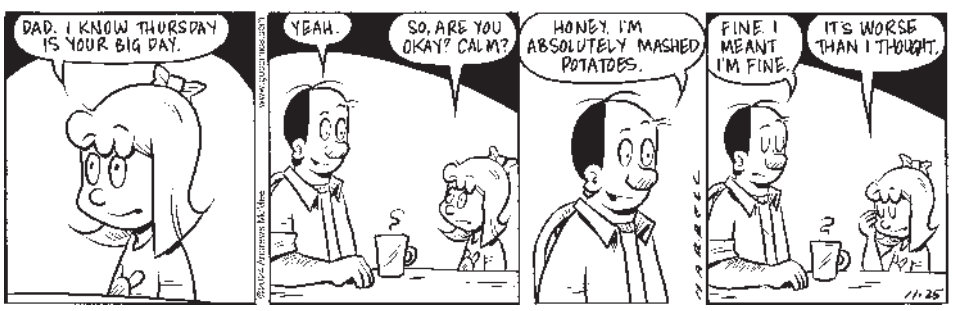

HEY DAD, I'LL GUESS ANY NUMBER YOU'RE THINKING OF! GO AHEAD, PICK A NUMBER!
MM... OK, I'VE GOT IT.
IS IT 92,376,051?
BY GOLLY, IT IS!
11-25
WAIT A MINUTE! YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO GET RID OF ME, AREN'T YOU?!
NO, YOU'RE PSYCHIC. GO SHOW MOM.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

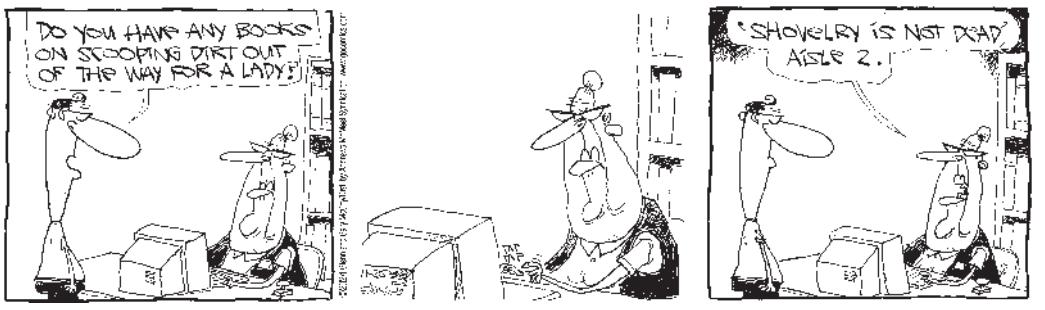
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


DAD, I KNOW THURSDAY IS YOUR BIG DAY.
YEAH.
SO, ARE YOU OKAY? CALM?
HONEY, I'M ABSOLUTELY MASHED POTATOES.
FINE. I MEANT I'M FINE.
IT'S WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.
11-25

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Throat clearer
5 Wall St. debut
8 Radar dot
12 Hawaiian dance
13 French diarist Anaïs
14 Lighten
15 Needing liniment
16 Thanksgiving staple
18 Aspen topper
20 Long-legged wading birds
21 Biblical kingdom
23 Depot (Abbr.)
24 Clumsy walker
28 Pouchlike parts
31 Tax-collecting org.
32 — the above
34 Long. crosser
35 Funny person
37 Invalidate
39 Gift for a tot
41 Cabbage salad
42 Scents
45 Is real
49 Protruded
51 Tidy
52 Prefix with byte
53 Industrious insect
54 Words to Brutus
55 CEO's aide
56 Fish eggs
57 56-Across provider

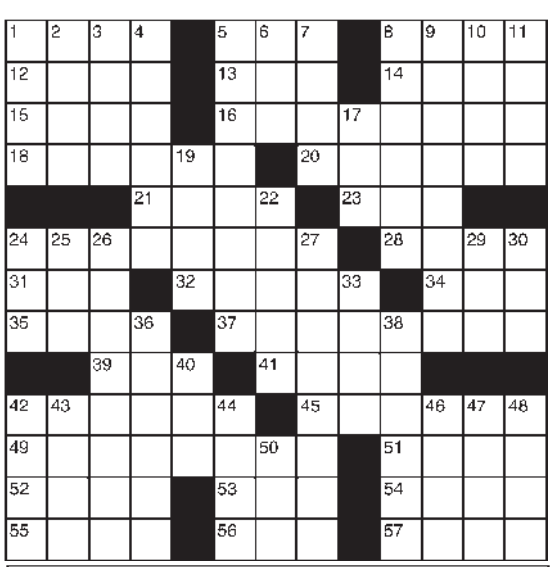
DOWN

1 Cries of discovery
2 Twain's Finn
3 K thru 12
4 Chaos
5 Loads, as software
6 Deep hole
7 Burden
8 Suits
9 Muhammad's boxing daughter
10 "— It Romantic?"
11 Dowels
17 U.S. Army bases
19 Actress Jessica
22 Thaws
24 — Lancelot
25 Part of TNT
26 Traveling shows for GIs
27 Casino wheel
29 Half- — (latte option)
30 Pigs' digs
33 Linen source
36 Male feline
38 Cords
40 Talk and talk
42 Hammett pooch
43 Numbered rds.
44 Take to the sky
46 Third son
47 "Toodle-oo!"
48 Poker type
50 Family card game

Solution time: 21 mins.

L	O	L	■	S	E	T	H	■	T	L	A	N
C	T	A	■	E	L	M	O	■	R	A	V	E
D	O	W	N	S	I	Z	E	■	O	P	E	D
A	E	N	E	A	S	■	D	A	Y	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	M	E	■	O	B	O	I	S	T
C	N	T	R	E	■	O	W	S	■	C	H	C
U	I	C	S	■	U	J	N	■	I	E	E	N
A	N	N	■	L	O	T	■	A	H	E	A	D
M	O	S	C	O	W	■	A	L	I	■	■	■
■	■	■	R	O	N	■	V	E	R	G	E	S
D	I	N	E	■	T	E	A	R	D	O	W	N
A	V	O	W	■	O	A	S	I	■	S	E	I
B	E	D	S	■	N	J	T	S	■	H	S	T

Last Friday's answer 11-25



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Katie Cassidy, 38; Jerry Ferrara, 45; Christina Applegate, 53; Bruno Tonioli, 69.

Happy Birthday: Take the initiative and pour your energy into your health and financial wellness. Step outside your comfort zone and utilize new connections and insights to add stability and security to your life. Living within your means and fixing instead of replacing possessions that need extra attention will help you budget your bank accounts and encourage you to take better care of yourself. Your numbers are 3, 12, 17, 22, 29, 37, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Refuse to let uncertainty disrupt your plans. Reflect on similar events, and you'll devise a system or strategy that gives you the freedom to move forward. Build a future based on what you know, and progress and expansion will follow. An unexpected situation will offer a unique change. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Slow down, accumulate your thoughts and digest the possibilities that depend on how you press forward. The desire to expand your ideas and take a risk will backfire. Take a moment to rethink your strategy. Today, it's better to observe than to react today. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Someone will offer hype and hope, but more is needed. Listen to the sales pitch; follow the dots closely, and you'll soon see where they lead. Take what validates you and set your game plan. It's best to follow your heart and take control. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Give your emotions a rest and let logic take over. Discover what moves you creatively and start a project that allows you to use your imagination and skills to explore moneymaking opportunities. It's time to promote and sell what you have to offer. Trust and believe in yourself. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Be open to learning rather than to doing the work for someone else's benefit. Let your talent shine through, and don't hesitate to present what you can do to those in a position to help you flourish. Attending and networking at conferences and trade shows will encourage new contacts and possibilities. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Establish your position, and don't limit your budget. Someone will be happy to dismantle your plans or to lead you in a direction that benefits them more than you. Focus on what's best for you and incorporate whatever is necessary to help you reach your goal. Romance and self-improvement are favored. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Discovering, learning and applying the latest technology to your work will raise standards and turn you into a role model everyone looks to for guidance. A mental or physical journey will offer insight and new dimensions to your goal. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* A change of routine will soothe your soul. Look before you leap, and then embrace what comes your way. Implement ideas that engage your brainpower to step up and offer food for thought. Engage in conversations that let your imagination flourish and encourage you to pursue your dreams. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Increase your investments and put more thought and time into raising your standards and daily routine. A healthy outlook and regimen will boost confidence and encourage a positive outcome. Be open regarding your intentions and replenish any relationship or work ethic that requires a jump-start. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A change at home will help you unleash your creativity and embark on something that improves your life by increasing functionality. A uniform approach and organized surroundings will help you see clearly and diminish any uncertainty you harbor. Don't give in to someone's negativity. Follow your heart. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Dig in and get things done. Refuse to let what others do or say dictate how you proceed. Change only what isn't working for you. Concentrate on what you do best and apply it to what needs doing. Your leadership ability will shine through and help you gain respect. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Refuse to let the negativity you face drag you down. Distance yourself from anyone trying to lead you astray, tempt you with excessive behavior or discourage you from taking the path that brings you peace of mind and stability. Attend events that resonate with you, and you'll meet someone special. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are energetic, proactive and sensitive. You are understanding and flexible.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	3		5	7				9
5	7			4	2	8		
			9		8		2	
4		3	7				9	
6			2	9				4
9	2		8		4		7	6
		1		5	7	9		2
						4		1
3			4	8		6		7

Difficulty: ★ 11/25

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Friday's Answer

6	5	8	2	4	7	3	9	1
9	3	4	6	5	1	8	7	2
7	2	1	9	3	8	6	5	4
5	9	2	7	1	6	4	3	8
4	8	7	5	2	3	1	6	9
3	1	6	8	9	4	5	2	7
8	4	5	3	7	2	9	1	6
2	6	9	1	8	5	7	4	3
1	7	3	4	6	9	2	8	5

Difficulty: ★★★★ 11/22

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

DAME MAGGIE SMITH (1934-2024) **Solution: 11 letters**

H	O	N	O	R	E	T	T	O	P	Y	R	R	A	H
A	T	F	A	B	E	V	E	R	L	E	Y	G	O	O
S	R	N	Q	A	M	E	N	I	C	H	R	I	S	L
C	E	Ⓜ	Ⓤ	Ⓜ	M	Y	H	O	U	S	E	I	S	L
R	B	N	A	A	Y	B	R	I	T	I	S	H	E	Y
E	O	O	R	S	Y	B	O	T	M	T	O	N	R	W
E	R	T	T	R	T	M	S	C	E	O	V	A	T	O
N	E	N	E	O	L	R	G	R	K	I	B	T	C	O
A	G	W	T	O	U	O	A	B	E	B	F	A	A	D
T	A	O	N	M	N	C	H	W	E	O	R	L	M	R
I	L	D	B	A	T	C	D	Y	G	L	P	I	A	O
O	O	R	G	O	T	H	E	L	L	O	O	E	R	F
N	I	A	A	I	C	O	N	I	C	R	H	V	D	X
A	L	K	W	E	C	N	E	L	L	E	C	X	E	O
L	R	O	S	S	E	F	O	R	P	O	I	S	E	D

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Abbey, Actress, BAFTA, Beloved, Beverley, British, Chris, Cinema, Downton, Drama, Emmy, Excellence, Harry Potter, Hogwarts, Hollywood, Honor, Hook, Iconic, London, McGonagall, Mum, My Aunt, My House, Natalie, National, Othello, Oxford, Poise, Professor, Quartet, Regal, Robert, Room, Screen, Sister Act, Toby, Umbria, View, Witch

Last Friday's answer : Aboriginals

The NEW Volume 77 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com. or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Markkanen, Jazz bury Knicks, 121-106

AP
Utah Jazz forward Lauri Markkanen goes to the hoop ahead of New York Knicks center Karl-Anthony Towns (32) during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Nov. 23, 2024, in Salt Lake City.

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Lauri Markkanen had 34 points, Collin Sexton had four 3-pointers in the fourth quarter and the Utah Jazz ran past the New York Knicks 121-106 on Saturday to snap a four-game skid.

Sexton finished 25 points and John Collins had 20 points and 13 rebounds forthe Jazz.

OG Anunoby scored a season-high 27 points, Jalen Brunson scored 23 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 16 points and 16 rebounds for the Knicks, who shot 39% from the field and lost for the first time in five games.

New York cut the lead to eight in the fourth quarter, but the Jazz responded with 10 consecutive points, capped by Johnny Juzang's 3-pointer to make it 104-86 with 6:16 remaining.

MAGIC 111, PISTONS 100

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Franz Wagner had 30 points, nine rebounds and eight assists, and Orlando beat Detroit for their eighth win in nine games.

Wagner, who has scored 30 or more points in five of his last seven games, sat out the fourth quarter while the Magic's bench stretched Orlando's lead to 22 with 7:19 remaining.

Mo Wagner had 18 points and seven rebounds off the Magic bench, and Jonathan Isaac added five points, 12 rebounds and three blocks.

Jaden Ivey led the Pistons with 19 points and seven rebounds. Malik Beasley, starting in place of the injured Cade Cunningham, added 18 points.

GRIZZLIES 142, BULLS 131

CHICAGO (AP)—Scotty Pippen Jr. had a career-best 30 points with 10 assists to lead Memphis past Chicago.

Jaylen Wells added 26 points as Memphis won its second straight.

Pippen, playing in the arena where his Hall of Fame father's retired number hangs, had 26 points in the first three quarters for Memphis, which has won three of its last four.

Memphis led 109-98 after three quarters and broke the game open with an 8-3 run in the opening minutes of the final period.

Jaren Jackson Jr. scored 23 points, and Santi Aldama added 10 points and 10 rebounds for Memphis, which led 64-60 at halftime and outrebounded the Bulls 49-35.

TRAIL BLAZERS 104, ROCKETS 98

HOUSTON (AP)—Anfernee Simons scored 25 points and Shaedon Sharpe added 24 as Portland bounced back from a tough loss with a win over Houston.

The victory came after Portland was blown out 116-88 by the Rockets in an NBA Cup game Friday night.

The Trail Blazers led by three late before Alperen Sengun cut the lead to 99-98 on a shot in the paint with 21 seconds left.

Portland got two free throws apiece from Deni Avdija and Sharpe to make it 103-98 with 4.3 seconds remaining. Simons added another free throw after a technical foul on Fred Van Vleet to secure the win.

BUCKS 125, HORNETS 119

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo had 32 points and 11 rebounds and Damian Lillard added 31 points to lead Milwaukee past Charlotte for their fourth consecutive victory.

Milwaukee opened the fourth quarter with a 14-5 spurt for a 110-90 lead, but the Hornets got it to 121-119 on Brandon Miller's 3-pointer with 15 seconds left.

Taurean Prince answered with a pair of free throws for the Bucks to make it a two-possession game, and Charlotte missed a pair of 3-pointers on the ensuing possession. Antetokounmpo hit two free throws with 4.5 seconds left to make it 125-119.

LaMelo Ball had a career-high 50 points for the Hornets, and Brandon Miller added 32. Ball hit 17 of 38 shots, including 6 of 17 beyond the arc, and 10 of 13 free throws.

Milwaukee, which completed a 4-0 homestand, has won six of its last seven. The only loss in that span was a 115-114 loss to the Hornets on Nov. 16 following a controversial foul call.

SPURS 104, WARRIORS 94

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—Victor Wembanyama scored 25 points, Harrison Barnes had 22 and San Antonio overcame a 17-point third-quarter deficit to beat Golden State.

Wembanyama added nine assists, seven rebounds and three blocks in his return from a three-game absence with a bruised right knee.

San Antonio rookie Stephon Castle added 19 points and stole the dribble from Golden State's Stephen Curry behind the 3-point line with 1:46 remaining to preserve an eight-point lead.

Andrew Wiggins had 20 points and Curry had 14 points for the Warriors, who had won two straight. Trayce Jackson-Davis added 12 points and eight rebounds.

San Antonio went on an 11-0 run for a 97-90 lead with Castle and Wembanyama accounting for all but two points. Golden State was held scoreless for 4 1/2 minutes and did not make a field goal for 5:19.

NUGGETS 127, LAKERS 102

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Nikola Jokic scored 34 points and Michael Porter Jr. added 24 as Denver used a strong second half to beat Los Angeles.

Russell Westbrook had 14 points, 11 assists and seven rebounds for Denver against his former team.

Austin Reaves scored 19 points and LeBron James added 18 for the Lakers, who lost consecutive home games after starting the season 7-0 at home. Rui Hachimura, back in the starting lineup after missed the previous five games with a left ankle sprain, scored 10 points in 22 minutes.

It was the teams' first meeting since the Nuggets beat the Lakers in the first round of the playoffs earlier this year. Denver also swept them in the Western Conference final the previous year.

Denver trailed by six points at halftime but outscored Los Angeles 37-15 in the third quarter and 70-39 for the second half while dominating inside and outside.

Pacers, Haliburton struggling early in their follow-up to breakthrough season

MILWAUKEE (AP)—If the first half of last season served as a coming-out party for Tyrese Haliburton and the Indiana Pacers, the early part of this one is underscoring the challenges of sustaining that level of success.

Indiana (6-10) has lost three straight and five of its last six after falling 129-117 to the Milwaukee Bucks on Friday. The Pacers are 0-2 in the NBA Cup after finishing second in this event last year, when it was known as the In-Season Tournament.

One reason for the drop-off is a slow start from Haliburton, who was part of the U.S. Olympic gold medal-winning team over the summer after earning third-team All-NBA honors last season while helping the Pacers make a surprising run into the Eastern Conference finals.

Haliburton is shooting just 37.8% overall and 29.4% from 3-point range, down from 47.7% overall and 36.4% from beyond the arc last season. His scoring average has dropped from 20.1 last season to 15.5 this year. He has 8.5 assists per game after averaging a league-high 10.9 in 2023-24.

"I've got to be better," Haliburton said.

This tournament represented a showcase for Haliburton a year ago, as he even mimicked Milwaukee star Damian Lillard's "Dame Time" celebration by pointing to his wrist while making a 3-pointer during a 27-point, 15-assist performance in a semifinal victory over the Bucks.

Haliburton now finds himself searching for answers. Although Haliburton had 18 points and nine assists Friday, he dismissed the notion this game represented a step forward for him. Much of his production came late in the game as the Pacers were trying to come back.

"I've just got to keep trusting myself, working hard, trusting my teammates," Haliburton said. "I'll figure it out."

Friday's performance followed a five-game stretch in which Haliburton shot 30.3% (20 of 66) overall. Haliburton was asked after the game if he has gained a better sense of what's been holding him back lately.

"No, I don't," he replied.

The Pacers' issues go beyond Haliburton's struggles. Multiple injuries have set them back, as Aaron Nesmith has missed the last three weeks with a sprained ankle and Andrew Nembhard last played Nov. 6 due to a knee issue.

Pacers forward Pascal Siakam refused to use those injuries to explain away Indiana's tough start.

This is the NBA, man," said Siakam, who had 25 points Friday. "It happens to everyone. You can't use it as an excuse."

Indiana coach Rick Carlisle saw some encouraging signs in the way the Pacers performed Friday, even though they never led.

The Pacers trailed by as many as 25 in the third quarter and were still down 20 with less than 10 minutes left, but they cut the deficit to six midway through the final period.

"It's something to build on, as tough as it's been," Carlisle said.

Carlisle said the Pacers seemed more connected at times Friday. He said that's been an issue in other games this year, noting how issues on one end of the floor would hamper them on the other end as well.

"We got together yesterday and talked about it in pretty great detail and had some real honest talk about it," Carlisle said. "We did a lot of listening to the players. They did a lot of talking to themselves about it."

The benefits of that conversation were evident in Indiana's second-half comeback Friday, but the Pacers ultimately fell short again to cap an 0-3 road trip. They return home for their next four games as they hope to continue improving their habits and start collecting some wins.

They only need to look at Friday's opponent to see how fast teams can turn their fortunes around in the Eastern Conference. The Bucks lost eight of their first 10 games. They've won five of six since and suddenly are up to sixth place in the East.

"Right now, it can't just be about the ball and who's touching it and who's getting shots," Carlisle said. "It's got to be about the entire team. It's got to be about the challenges that we're up against and what we're representing.

"We're representing a great organization, a great state, a great fan base. And now we have a very important week ahead of us. Nothing will come easy this year – nothing."

Nick Chubb' 2-yard TD gives Browns 24-19 win over Steelers

CLEVELAND (AP)—With snow falling, Nick Chubb plowed forward.

On a play that looked eerily similar to the one in Pittsburgh last year that threatened to end his career, Chubb kept his legs moving and pushed his way into the end zone for a touchdown he and his teammates won't forget.

Chubb ran for a 2-yard touchdown w ith 57 seconds left, and the Cleveland Browns stunned one of their division rivals on Thursday night, beating the Steelers 24-19 and ending their five-game winning streak.

Chubb's score came in his first game against the AFC North-leading Steelers (8-3) since the running back sustained a season-ending left knee injury in Week 2 last September in a Monday night game against the Steelers.

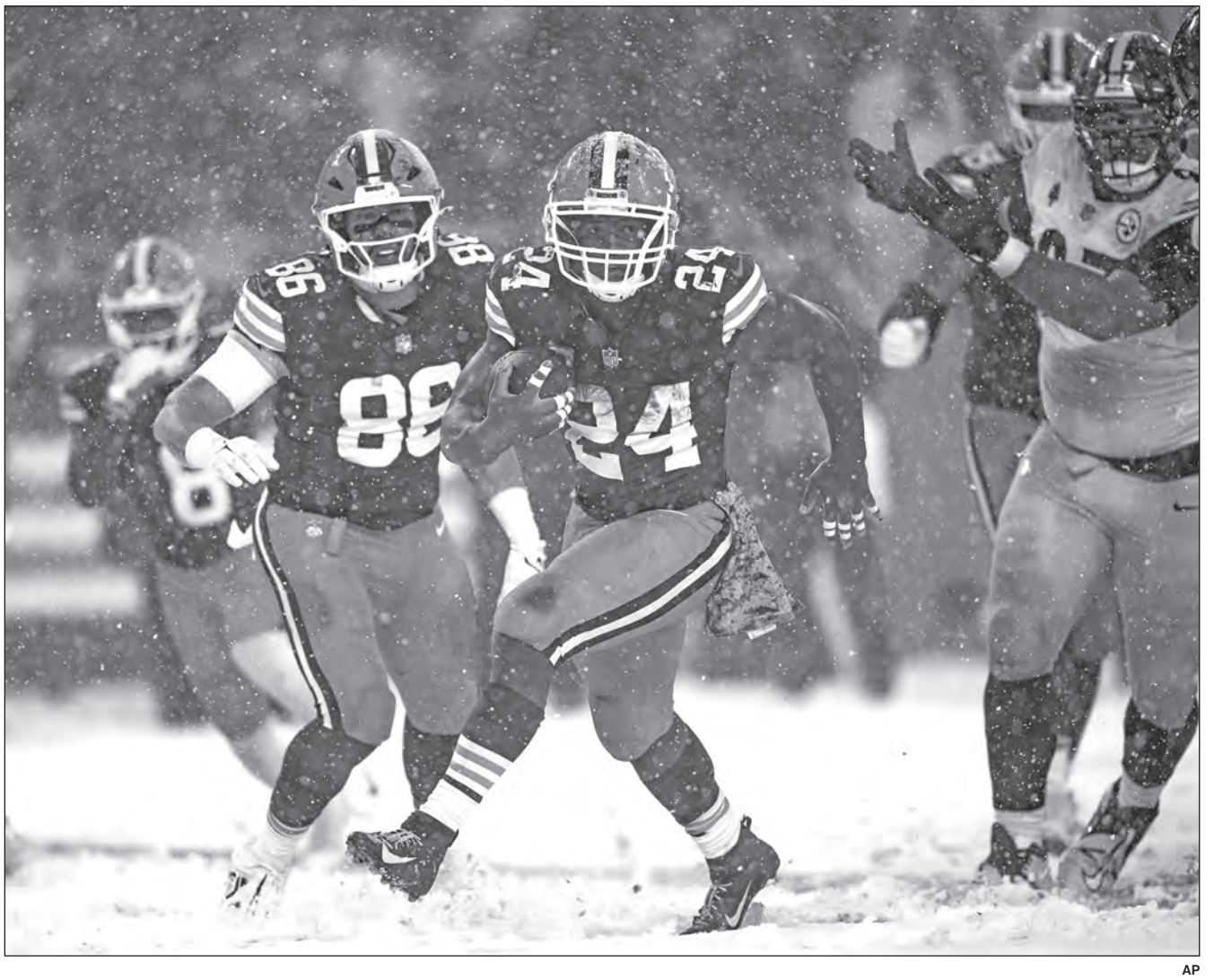
Chubb, who had injured the same knee while playing at Georiga in 2015, had to endure grueling rehab sessions to make it back on the field, and the sight of him scoring against the dreaded Steelers was almost poetic.

"It meant a lot to me. I know it means a lot to him," said Myles Garrett, who had three sacks. "He won't say it, but it's true. I'll say it because this time last year we were sick to our stomachs. There was just so much in the air, so for him to come back and be pivotal in this game just speaks to the kind of resilience and the man that he is.

"We absolutely love him."

Chubb also scored on a 2-yard run in the second quarter.

The Browns (3-8) had blown a 12-point lead in the fourth quarter and were down 19-18 before getting the ball back with 3:22 remaining after Pittsburgh punter Corliss Waitman shanked a 16-yarder.



AP

Cleveland Browns running back Nick Chubb (24) carries for a touchdown in the second half of an NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers, Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024, in Cleveland.

With snow piling up and covering the yard lines on the field, Cleveland's Jameis Winston c ompleted a third-down pass to Jerry Jeudy to the Pittsburgh 9. Two plays later, Chubb barreled into the end zone.

Chubb did not speak to the media afterward, but his teammates were overjoyed and couldn't wait to share his story.

"I'm his No. 1 fan when he's out there," Browns running back Jerome Ford said. "If I could, I would start the 'Chubb' chant every time he steps on the field."

The Steelers had one last chance, but Russell Wilson's Hail Mary on the final play was knocked down by Browns safety Grant Delpit in the end zone, touching off a wild celebration at Huntington Bank Field.

Amid a disastrous season, beating the Steelers eased pressure on coach Kevin Stefanski and gave Cleveland fans something to savor.

"Our guys love playing under the lights," Stefanski said. "They love playing in front of these fans. Add the snow element, it was pretty cool."

With early snow flurries giving way to blizzard-like conditions in the fourth quarter that blanketed the field in white—Amazon Prime Video used graphics on its telecast to show the otherwise invisible numbers and hash marks—the Steelers quickly erased an 18-6 deficit, scoring two touchdowns in just over a minute.

Wilson's 23-yard TD pass to Calvin Austin III with 6:15 left put Pittsburgh ahead by one. Nick Herbig's strip-sack of Winston set up the go-ahead score and put the Steelers in position to win their sixth straight and open a two-game lead in the AFC North over Baltimore.

However, the Browns responded and pulled off their second divisional win after beating the Ravens last month.

"We should've won that game," Wilson said. "We felt like we battled in a tough environment. The way we answered in the fourth quarter was pretty special and we had a chance at the end, too."

Jaylen Warren scored on a 3-yard run midway through the fourth to pull the Steelers to 18-13. Then, as always seems to be the case, Pittsburgh's defense came up with the big play as Herbig got to Winston and safety DeShon Elliott recovered the fumble.

Garrett outplayed Steelers star T.J. Watt—like he planned.

Garrett dominated the first half, sacking Wilson and putting constant pressure on the Steelers' QB. The performance came during a week in which the Browns star commented about Watt's seeming slight when Garrett was named Defensive Player of the Year over him last season.

"I wanted to make it known that I'm the guy, I'm No. 1 as an edge defender. That was a statement I was intending to make and I think I made."

Garrett set up Cleveland's second score with a strip-sack of Wilson. As he was being blocked, Garrett popped the ball from Wilson's grip and linebacker Winston Reid recovered.

The Browns drove to the 16 and settled for a 34-yard field from Dustin Hopkins, who missed two kicks weeks a week ago in a loss at New Orleans.

Chubb's TD dive in the second quarter capped a 12-play, 80-yard drive by the Browns, who gained just 19 yards and had two three-and-outs in the first quarter.

The Steelers drove inside Browns territory on their first three possessions, but came away with just three points.

Chris Boswell, who made six field goals last Sunday for all of Pittsburgh's points in a win over Baltimore, missed a 58-yard field goal in the first quarter while the field was still in good shape. It was only his second miss in 31 attempts this season.

Analysis: If Jets don't want Aaron Rodgers back, 4-time MVP will find another home

By ROB MAADDI
AP Pro Football Writer

Joe Douglas is gone. Robert Saleh already was fired. Aaron Rodgers could be next to leave the New York Jets.

Douglas lost his job as the general manager on Tuesday, six weeks after the head coach was replaced following a 2-3 start. The Jets have gone 1-5 under interim coach Jeff Ulbrich so owner Woody Johnson sent Douglas packing.

Rodgers has played more like a 40-year-old quarterback coming off an Achilles tendon injury than a four-time NFL MVP. He's expressed a desire to play another season. The big question is whether the Jets will want him back. Maybe they'll decide to take one more shot at a playoff run with Rodgers while having him mentor a rookie quarterback. Or, they could start fresh. There are significant contract ramifications either way.

Rodgers is slated to make a non-guaranteed $37.5 million in 2025 with a dead cap hit of $49 million as his salary cap total goes from $17.1 million to $23.5 million.

The Jets could spread the dead money over two years by releasing Rodgers with the use of post-June 1 designation. He has a no-trade clause in his contract so they would need his permission to make a deal.

If Rodgers doesn't retire and New York's new regime wants a clean slate, here are potential destinations for the future first-ballot Hall of Famer:

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS: This could only happen if Brock Purdy's shoulder injury is more significant than is known. Rodgers is a native of northern California and grew up a Niners fan. Returning home to help San Francisco win its sixth Super Bowl has to be attractive. Playing for coach Kyle Shanahan surrounded by playmakers Christian McCaffrey, Deebo Samuel and George Kittle would be a quarterback's dream. Again, Purdy is the team's present and future. And, he's resilient. Purdy rebounded from elbow surgery following his rookie season to start Week 1 last year and ended up finishing fourth in MVP voting, leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl. Purdy also is due for a contract extension and a major raise so the salary cap makes this even more of a longshot. But never say never in the NFL.

MINNESOTA VIKINGS: Sam Darnold has been more than a stopgap, helping the Vikings (8-2) to an impressive start. J.J. McCarthy is the future, however, and Darnold will be a free agent after the season. If the Vikings fall short of a Super Bowl and Rodgers shows over the final six weeks that he can play championship football, this could be a fit. The Vikings could let McCarthy sit and learn for another year, especially coming off a knee injury that required a second surgery earlier this month.

NEW YORK GIANTS: Rodgers wouldn't have to move. The Giants will need a quarterback after benching Daniel Jones this week with the intent to move on from him. They could draft a quarterback in the first round and have him learn behind Rodgers for a season. That'll depend on which pick New York ends up with because it's a thin draft class. Unlike the Jets, the Giants (2-8) haven't made any coaching or GM changes yet. If it's status quo with GM Joe Schoen and coach Brian Daboll, one year with Rodgers isn't unrealistic.

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS: They also need a quarterback. Brock Bowers could set an NFL record for most catches by a tight end if he had Rodgers next season. The Raiders (2-8) are aiming for a high pick to get a shot at a quarterback of their choice. New minority owner Tom Brady believes rookie quarterbacks need time to develop and learn. The seven-time Super Bowl champion would have to be in favor of having Rodgers start and tutor a youngster.

TENNESSEE TITANS: If Will Levis doesn't prove over the final seven games that he can be a No. 1 quarterback, the Titans (2-8) will be in the QB market and likely have a high draft pick. It's another scenario where Rodgers would fit as a one-year bridge.

CNMI U12 baseball team to debut in WBSC qualifier

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For the first time, CNMI is sending a U12 baseball team to compete in the 2024 U12 Baseball World Baseball Softball Confederation Qualification Tournament that will be held on Guam from Nov. 27 to Dec. 3.

The Natibu Sports Association and the Saipan Baseball League have yielded a 16-player team of U12 all-stars to compete in the qualifiers for a chance to advance to the 2025 WBSC U12 Baseball World Cup in Taipei, Taiwan.

They are taking on Guam and Australia's U12 teams in a double round robin format.

The CNMI is first going head-to-head against Guam on Friday, Nov. 29, at 2pm, then on Saturday, Nov. 30, at 10:30am.

The CNMI U12 Baseball Team sluggers are Skyler Leon Guerrero, Lennox Sablan, Elijah Babauta, Liam Sablan, Nate Nekai, Dylan Barcinas, Khoen Torres, Jo'ell Passi Herman, Scott Muna, Juan Damian, Denzel Kaipat, Izaiah Haro, Nathaniel Neth, Keoni Rosario, Damian Sablan, and Roque Camacho Jr.

The coaching staff includes Calvani Deleon Guerrero, Ian Norita, Nick Nekai, Kyle Hocog, and Herman Kintol.

The team captain is Dylan Barcinas, while Damian Sablan is their co-captain.

The CNMI team was chosen from a pool of players from the Natibu Sports Association Youth Baseball League that was held last April to June.

LEIGH GASES

The CNMI U12 Baseball Team poses for a group photo with some of their coaches during one of their practices at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Baseball Field.

From there, the players have practiced on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and sometimes Saturdays at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

According to Kyle Hocog in an interview last week, the team is just continuing to sharpen up their skills for the upcoming competition.

"A lot of base running, pitching techniques, and hitting, hitting, hitting," he said. Going up against Australia, he said, "Our boys may look a little small compared to Australia and maybe Guam, but they have a lot of fight in them. It's going to be really fun to see them compete."

With the team debuting for The CNMI in its first ever stint in this tourney, he said his expectations are for them to "to compete and a lot of game play. It's good experience for the guys. Like one of the coaches said, they are inspiring the next group of boys. Just having CNMI on your chest and hat—there's nothing like it. "

He then thanked the Natibu Sports Association, the Saipan Baseball League, the parents, coaches, and organizing committee for their hard work and volunteering. The team has had a few fundraisers leading up to the tourney.

According to their website, the WBSC is the international governing body for the sport of baseball/softball including all the related disciplines. The WBSC has 190 (183 full members, seven provisional nembers) national federations and 14 associated members in 138 countries and territories across Asia, Africa, the Americas, Europe and Oceania, which represent a united baseball/softball sports movement that encompasses over 65 million athletes and attracts approximately 150 million fans to stadiums worldwide annually.

SSHS

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33-23, but SSHS' precision inside the court made them run away with the lead, 37-24. MCS would go on to score just 2 more points, while Teneasha Diaz ended it with a shot beyond the arc for a 40-26 final.

Ramon led the game with 15 points, followed by Azzy's 8, and Aiyana's 6 markers.

In the game before hand, MHS took on their sister team, MHS JV, and won, 29-6.

The varsity team was no match to their junior varsity sisters as they held them to just 4 points in the first half, while they led by 10 points.

Reannamae Manglona and Stacy Arriola then solidified their eventual win in the second half by scoring 6 points and 5 points, respectively. Meanwhile, the JV squad scored just 2 more points from Richelle Sune.

Manglona led with 7 points, while Arriola scored 6.

SSHS 40 – Ramon 15, Saralu 8, Azzy Fatialofa 8, Aiyana Fatialofa 6, Diaz 3.

MCS 26 – Quitugua 12, Abuan 6, Kwon 5, Pangelinan 3.

Scoring by halves: 16-8, 40-26.

MHS 29 – Manglona 7, Arriola 6, Estella 4, George 3, Dela Rosa 3, Relucio 2, Surima 2, Padiernos 2.

MHS JV 6 – Sune 4, Torres 2.

Scoring by halves: 14-4, 29-6.

LEIGH GASES

Saipan Southern High School's Shaenna Yamada in action during their game against Mount Carmel School in the 2024-2025 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

PH

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its first ever Davis Cup competition.

"The Philippines was the best team here, out of 15, and we are the second best. In our first Davis Cup competition that's something to be excited and proud of. The Philippines No. 1 played amazing tennis and a son of Saipan beat him. The Philippines has 2,346 times more people than the CNMI and we almost beat them. I couldn't be prouder of this group of guys," he said.

Asked what was the No. 1 lesson learned after the tournament, the CNMI sports hall of famer said, "Don't start playing Davis Cup when the Philippines is in Group 5." He also thanked Jerry and Lydia Tan for supporting the team.

The loss to the Philippines last Saturday was the lone stain in the CNMI's otherwise fruitful weeklong campaign in the Middle East country as the team went unscathed in pool play. It swept Bhutan and Maldives in its first two ties before exacting the same punishment against Laos in its last game before facing the Philippines.

Against Laos last Friday, Schorr opened up with a dominating 6-1, 6-0 win over Songbandith Somphone before Sinclair gave the CNMI the tie with a 6-4, 6-0 victory over Simmalavong Sataporn.

In the doubles, Colin Ramsey and Tomas Abel took three sets to conquer Khamphoumany Ananda and Somphone, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Schorr summed up his first Davis Cup stint as simply unforgettable.

"The Philippines was a really tough team and they played very well. We fought hard but came up short in the end unfortunately. My Davis Cup experience was great. I enjoyed playing against good players from all over the Middle East and Asia, getting to know some new people from different countries, and enjoying my stay in Bahrain. The NMI team is something truly special that I am lucky to be a part of, and I am especially honored to be a part of this group and make history for the NMI."

He then took the opportunity to thank his support system for advancing his tennis career.

"I want to thank my parents for gifting me the opportunity to play this sport, all the coaches and teammates I have had throughout my tennis career, and especially my Davis Cup team here with me in Bahrain. They were a huge support and I couldn't have done what I did without them.

Ramsey said he had an unforgettable experience playing in the Davis Cup.

"We set the expectations high for NMI tennis even though we came up short against the Philippines. It's a country with more than 100 million people against a small island of 45,000 and we came very close to beating them. I am very proud of the way we showed up this year and I'm excited to show up even stronger next year."

Despite coming short against the Philippines, he said there's still a lot to be thankful for.

"Lydia and Jerry Tan had a huge part to play in getting the team to Bahrain and making sure we looked good when we got here. Colin Sinclair took time off from playing in the tour to be here with us; it's a pleasure to watch him dance around the court. Jeff Race always pours his heart out for tennis and I really respect him as a coach/captain. Robbie Schorr never ceases to amaze me with the things he's able to accomplish at the court; coupled with an unparalleled fighting spirit he's an asset to the NMI. My doubles partner Tomas Abel made each point on court more rewarding, keeping our 3-0 record and sharing his valuable experiences with the team. Our team manager and my lovely mother, Karen Buettner, brought her overwhelming positivity, taking care of the team and forging relationships with other countries as well.

Abel summed up his Davis Cup experience in one word—amazing.

"We played some heroic matches against the Philippines, in true David vs. Goliath fashion and Colin S. and Robbie brought us to the brink of bringing them down. They gave it their all and it was by far the best match of the tournament. Next year, we are moving up for sure!"

He also said it was a dream come true to play in the Davis Cup.

"Let's call it stretch that at this point in my life I could still make the team for such a momentous championship but stars aligned and I spent the week with the most wonderful people and the best tennis players in CNMI history. We made history here too and came ever so close to moving up to the next group on our first try. Coach Jeff and Karen have done an excellent job pulling this together and supporting the team on courts. I also want to thank my family and friends for all their support and huge shoutout to my father who probably waited for this moment for 40 years. He's the one who brought me into the tennis world and I know this just made his Top 10 list."

CNMI women's turn

The CNMI Women's National Tennis Team, meanwhile, will also make its 2024 Billie Jean King Cup debut this week, also at the Bahrain Tennis Federation tennis courts in Isa Town, Bahrain.

Making up the team are Carol Lee, Isabel Heras, Asia Raulerson, and Hye Jin Elliot. Lydia Tan is the CNMI's captain in the Billie Jean King Cup.

"It will be a good team and they all get along well. No expectations [really] as it's Team NMI's first time playing this BJKC and this competition is much higher level. Will just do our best. The team had practice yesterday (Friday) and it seems they adjusted to the courts condition well," said Tan.

She added that Georgia Tech standout Lee will be the CNMI's No. 1 player and Heras, who also played tennis collegiately, will be the No. 2 player.

Lee thanked the Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association for picking her to be part of Team NMI in the Billie Jean King Cup.

"It's an honor to be playing for the NMI team for the first time and I am excited to compete with my teammates. Our goal is to get promoted to the next group but I expect us to just perform, compete, and give our best on court while we represent the NMI team in BJK Cup."

Raulerson, for her part, said she's looking forward for the BJK Cup and her expectations is "to win and play hard and play smart all the way."

Prior to coming to Bahrain, Raulerson was training at Albany State University with her former collegiate teammates. "I have used up my four years of eligibility and I graduate this December."

Markkanen, Jazz bury Knicks, 121-106

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CNMI U12 baseball team to debut in WBSC qualifier

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PH spoils NMI promotion to Group 4

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

The CNMI bowed to the Philippines, 1-2, in the crossover finals between the top teams in Pool B and Pool C in Group 5 of the Davis Cup last Saturday at the Bahrain Tennis Federation tennis courts in Isa Town, Bahrain.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The CNMI 2024 Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup players and officials pose for a group at the Bahrain Tennis Federation tennis courts in Isa Town, Bahrain. Back from left, Colin Sinclair, Tomas Abel, Robbie Schorr, Davis Cup team manager Karen Buettner, Colin Ramsey, and Davis Cup captain Jeff Race. Front row from left, Carol Lee, Hye Jin Elliott, Asia Raulerson, and Isabel Heras.

» Carol Lee to lead NMI in BJKC

Making its Davis Cup debut, captain Jeff Race's team topped Pool C but faced a Philippine team, which topped Pool B, banished from Davis Cup play due to inactivity the past four years and thus relegated to the bottom rung of the yearly international tennis competition.

In the first singles match, CNMI No. 2 Robbie Schorr was outclassed by the Philippines' No. 1 player Eric Olivarez Jr., 1-6, 0-6.

Davis Cup veteran and CNMI No. 1 Colin Sinclair then tied the competition after a come-from-behind 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 victory over the Philippines' No. 2 Alberto Lim. Sinclair used to play for Pacific Oceania before the CNMI was admitted to the Davis Cup family last year.

The Philippines then clinched the tie when Robert Gonzales and Francis Alcantara upended Sinclair and Schorr, 7-5, 6-1.

Race said despite the loss to former Group 2 campaigner the Philippines, the CNMI still had an impressive showing in

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Brewers let it pour, 19-13

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Brewers, one of the 2024 Saipan Baseball League Masters League's newest teams, poured it on the league's other newest team Falcons, 19-13, in their game last Thursday at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Despite a slow burn, the Brewers had a lot left on top towards the end of the game which left the Falcons reeling. The Falcons chugged at the same pace as the Brewers and were only behind by one at the end of the second, 3-4.

The Falcons then found themselves on top after a three-run third inning from Mario Aguon, Mike Guerrero, and Tony Pangelinan, but the Brewers got within one after Hector Efraim scored for a 5-6 game.

The Brewers pitching staff then brewed something special in the fourth inning as they didn't allow any hits but allowed one runner on base from a hit-by-pitch. Their offense also crafted a dazzling display with their turn at the bat as they scored five runs to retake the lead, 10-6.

The Falcons weren't knocked out yet and still had some fight left in them in the fifth and rounded the bases five times to swing the lead back into their favor, 11-10.

But it was bottoms up from there for the Brewers, as they churned an offensive rally that awakened all their bats once again. Eight runs would score and seesaw the game back to their side, 18-11.

The Falcons would go on to push across just two more runs in the sixth, while the Brewers posted a final run for a 19-13 final.

The Brewers leadoff batter, Cris George, went two-for-four at-bat, scored in two runs, and had two RBIs, while Jess Taitano helped the team by going two-for-two with one double, scoring one run, and hitting two runs in.

In last Friday's game, the Blue Jays drowned the Marlins, 19-14.

Games are played every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 6:30pm. The postseason is slated for Feb. 10, 11, 17, and 18, with the best-of-three championship series on Feb. 24, 26, and 28 if needed.

LEIGH GASES

The Brewers' Byron Kaipat jogs to home plate during their game against the Falcons in the 2024 Saipan Baseball League Masters League at the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Baseball Field.

Undefeated SSHS and MHS atop girls hoops

LEIGH GASES

Saipan Southern High School's Azzy Fatialofa posts up for a mid-range jumper as she's defended by a Mount Carmel School player during their game in the 2024-2025 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
leigh_gases@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Defending champions Saipan Southern High School Lady Manta Rays and Marianas High School Lady Dolphins are atop the standings of the 2024-2025 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League with their undefeated record of three wins each.

Last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, SSHS disassembled the Mount Carmel School Lady Knights, 40-26.

MCS had an erstwhile undefeated record of three wins prior to this loss, but found their match against the defending champions.

The Lady Rays asserted their dominance early on with great and open takes at the basket by Jahsmin Ramon and Azzy Fatialofa. MCS tried to hang from sharp shooter Aubrey Quitugua and Mia Abuan's effort, but fell short for a 14-4 first half.

The second quarter saw MCS go at it with renewed vigor. They drew first blood from a shot by Jieun Kwon, followed by another 3-pointer from Quitugua. With 12 minutes left, MCS still had a chance to close the gap even more, but SSHS moved with more purpose and aggressiveness after a timeout.

The Fatialofa sisters were a force to be reckoned with as the younger Aiyana helped with defense and rebounds. She added a few points herself and helped add to their total along with her older sister and Ramon.

With nine minutes left, MCS got within 10 points,

See SSHS on Page 15

LEIGH GASES

Saipan Southern High School's Jahsmine Ramon pushes her way past a Mount Carmel School defender during their game in the 2024-2025 IT&E Interscholastic Girls High School Basketball League last Friday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.